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A Journal of Opinion

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Eisenhower for Invasion

In the President's radio speech on Christmas Eve the item of news that caught the headlines was the selection of General Eisenhower to invade Europe from the west. No civilian can comment with authority on the choice of military leaders, since many of the important facts are obscured by necessary secrecy. Yet in so far as judgment is possible, General Eisenhower would seem to be a sound choice. He has had experience as the leader of the greatest amphibious invasions in history, those in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, and he made brilliant successes of them. He knows a lot about such invasions that could never be communicated to any inexperienced man, even one as able as General Marshall. It is also evident that our allies think well of General Eisenhower.

As to the other choices, the comment above is also valid. General Montgomery, the only photogenic commander this war has yet produced, is a leader of great skill, idolized by his troops. General Marshall has proved himself as American Chief-of-Staff and there was no good reason to replace him. General Spaatz, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson and General Sir Harold Alexander are all sound and seasoned commanders. It is an open secret, by the way, that Eisenhower will have at his elbow in London one of the most brilliant of that extraordinary group of Russian generals thrown up by the war.

FDR and the Postwar World

From the President's Christmas Eve talk we obtain a clearer picture of the postwar world, as he sees it, than we have had yet. "Unconditional surrender" is no longer our sole formula for the Germans. We do not want them enslaved, but to have "a normal chance to develop in peace as useful and respectable members of the European family." Probably this new attitude represents Stalin's influence on Churchill and Roosevelt at Teheran. It signalizes the closing of the great and dangerous gap which heretofore existed between Russia and the Western Allies. There is still danger ahead, especially if the British government should adopt the ideas of General Smuts; but for the present, at least, the three chief Allies are presenting a united front toward Germany as they have never done before.

The President believes that peace must be maintained by force but he says nothing about an international police force whose members would be removed from the armed services of their own countries. He also failed to mention any formalized League of Nations. Both from his speech and from other available sources of information, it seems probable that the President is thinking of "the nuclear alliance" of the United States, Great Britain, Russia and China. But such an alliance would be almost entirely formal—the continuing friendly coöperation of Chiang Kai-shek, Stalin, Churchill and the President of the United States.

This idea will suggest—to others if not to himself—the idea of a possible fourth term for the President. Say over to yourself this sentence and see how it sounds: "The peace was made and preserved by Chiang Kai-shek, Stalin, Churchill and Dewey." Or even: "Chiang Kai-shek, Stalin, Churchill and Bricker."

Another Week of War

Russia provided most of the good news of a military character during the week ending December 20.

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Her heavy attacks on the northern and central fronts were successful in their initial stages, and must have made grim reading in Berlin. In the past, the Germans have achieved all their triumphs in Russia in the summer; the Russians have uniformly outfought the enemy in the deep snow. The Germans have been retiring in good order, with most of their forces intact; their whole retreat of the past few months has been a remarkable military achievement, in view of the fact that to retreat is the most difficult of all operations. The Germans are still strong in Russia; but we now have convincing evidence, especially in the battle before Kiev, that the Russians are stronger still.

In Italy, the Allied armies continued to inch forward in an effort which has become heartbreakingly slow. Military men knew before the invasion began that this would be the case. The attack through Italy had a great advantage for the Allies in that a line across the comparatively narrow peninsula could be held with a fairly small force which would not be in danger of an outflanking movement. But the converse is also true: that the defense can be maintained with an equally small force. It is reported on good authority that Tito's Partisans in Yugoslavia, despite inadequate equipment, are actually pinning down more first-rank German troops than are fighting us in Italy.

On Other Fronts

The news that General Eisenhower had been appointed to lead our invasion forces in the West caused many people to jump to the conclusion that the invasion is imminent. This is of course not necessarily true. While the actual date is a well guarded secret, all available evidence indicates that it is still some months away. Meanwhile, the bombardment of Germany continued last week, interrupted at intervals by bad weather. Very heavy formations also attacked the French coast and there were reports, without confirmation and seeming dubious on their face, that these bombings were intended to smash new German rocket guns. All sorts of wild stories were in circulation regarding these guns.

The day after Christmas, the British navy reported an important victory in the sinking of the German 26,000-ton battleship, the Scharnhorst. The British believe that every important German ship is now sunk or badly damaged.

In the Southwest Pacific, American Marines made two more landings on New Britain, as part of the long, hard island-hopping route to Japan—a route which seems more difficult, the more we consider it. The promised drive through Burma was still postponed, although there were signs it might soon begin.

Prices, Wages and Strikes

Over the Christmas holidays, strikes were threatened in three basic industries—railroads, steel and coal. In all three cases, the men who were threatening to walk out appeared to have legitimate grievances; but a stoppage in any one of the three would have a disastrous, conceivably even a fatal, effect upon the war. It begins to seem clear that we must make a fresh start on the problem of wages in wartime. The Roosevelt administration put into effect the Little Steel formula on the theory that the cost of living would be controlled. But Congress doesn't want the cost of living controlled and has, in several pieces of legislation, forbidden this in large areas of our economy. The result is that everybody is getting more money except the workers, who are under the thumb of the War Labor Board. It is true that the annual pay of the average worker has increased, but this is mainly because of full employment and overtime pay, and not because of increases in the basic wage rate. In Canada this question seems to have been satisfactorily settled. Wages are tied to the cost of living; when the latter goes up, the former are also and proportionately increased. (This need not of course prevent wage increases for those whose incomes are substandard when the plan goes into effect.) It looks as though we should either have to adopt some such scheme or else take off all controls and let the whole community scramble for more money, in the midst of an inflation that would penalize nearly all salaried people and all recipients of fixed incomes, and would demoralize our whole economy. Certainly, we ought not to go on as at present, paying no attention to the plight of any group of wage earners until they attract our attention by threatening to strike.

Christmas Spree

In the Christmas rush, the consumers nearly cleaned out the retail shops. Though, according to early estimates, they did not spend quite so much as last year, they bought far more than in any recent year of peace. Night clubs and theatres were jammed. It is tempting to comment that this action scarcely harmonizes with the fact that we are on the eve of one of the bloodiest campaigns in the greatest war of the nation's history.

There are redeeming features. Many of the gifts were for those in the armed forces, and many of the parties were for soldiers or sailors on leave. It is puritanical to insist that people should not have all the fun they can, even in the most serious crisis, so long as they do not retard the prosecution of the war. Those under the greatest strain are most in need of occasional release. As far as the economic consequences are concerned, it is better to spend money for such luxuries as are available than to patronize black markets for gasoline, meat and butter. Presumably most of the goods sold had either been manufactured before the restrictions on civilian production or had been made by permission of the war-mobilization authorities.

We must remember as a general rule, however, that the total of such articles is far smaller than the pur-

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chasing power in the hands of consumers, and that so long as war necessity prevents the expansion of consumers' goods, the only way to avoid inflation is to pay heavy taxes and buy government bonds to the limit of our power.

Bolivia Raises a Question

Apprehension has been expressed about the coup d'état in Bolivia because those who have seized power are reported to have been pro-Axis in the past and may be acting as tools of Hitler. Furthermore, they may make trouble in Latin America by demands for Chilean territory, with a port on the Pacific. They protest that they favor the United Nations, will hold democratic elections and institute social reforms in behalf of the workers. Secretary Hull is correct in regarding these protestations with a good deal of caution; firm guarantees should be required before the new government is recognized. Bolivia is technically at war with Germany; her tin and other minerals are essential to the United Nations; and numerous projects not only for the production of strategic materials but for the benefit of the population have been inaugurated with the aid of the United States. It would be calamitous to abet rule of the country by Axis agents.

Nevertheless it will not do to be naïve about situations like this. Bolivia for years has been a democratic country only on paper. President Penaranda, who was thrown out by the revolt, was himself a dictator, and far from a benevolent one. One of the most disturbing incidents of his incumbency was bloody repression of a strike in the tin mines. He was induced to improve labor conditions only by pressure from this country. May not his successor likewise be a politician who will let his actions be influenced by the prestige and power of the belligerents who are in the ascendancy? In other cases Latin American dictators have been induced to improve their ways, at least internationally, by the benefits of coöperation with the United States—notably Batista of Cuba and Vargas of Brazil.

Argentina's Infection

Perhaps the gravest question regarding what has happened in Bolivia is whether it represents a spread of the Axis infection which has poisoned Argentina. There, the new army dictatorship is avowedly pro-German in foreign affairs and systematically fascist in its domestic measures. It represents, not mere Nazi intrigue, but reactionary elements at home who are genuinely afraid of democracy and progress, such as the military, a large part of the Catholic Church, and the feudal landholders. Unless something is done soon to change the Argentine situation, it will supply a postwar foothold in the Western Hemisphere for the very thing we are fighting in Europe and Asia. And the fact that it is getting away with its defiance of the United States and the other United Nations is likely to encourage the spread of the influence among neighboring states, where much the same social and political influences are at work.

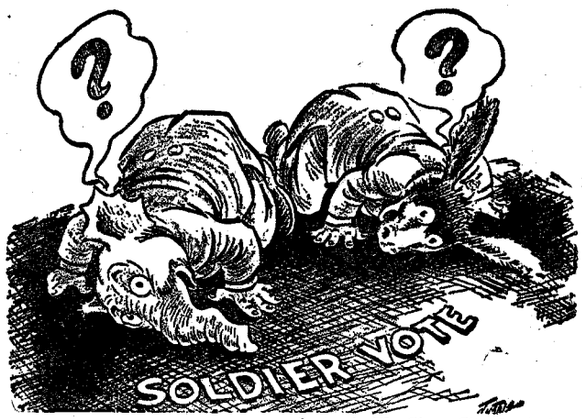
The anomaly of the Argentine situation is that economically the very classes which support the dictatorship are completely dependent on exports to Great Britain and imports from Britain and the United States. If these two powers would unite in an economic embargo on their enemy in the Western Hemisphere, the life of the dictatorship would be short. Instead, they seem to be spending most of their energies competing with each other for postwar Argentine trade. If fascism survives in the Americas, it will be largely the fault of this weakness at the very heart of the United Nations.

Unpleasant Truths About China

The picture of China painted by Eric Sevareid in his article on page 9 of this issue is much more gloomy than most of the reports which come through the censorship from Chungking. Mr. Sevareid, who recently returned from China, shows us inflation doing its deadly work. Bank notes printed in New York are being rushed into China by the airplane load. We shall soon send in $200,000,000 of gold bullion—80 to 100 airplane loads of gold at a time when weapons are desperately needed.

As always happens under inflation, the very rich and the very poor are getting on fairly well. Peasant income is down about 10 percent. The middle classes and all people on fixed incomes, such as officials, soldiers and teachers, are in destitution. Some of China's ablest writers and artists, says Mr. Sevareid, are starving.

Neither The New Republic nor the author recites these facts out of any ill will toward the government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek; in fact, just the contrary. Mr. Sevareid gives very good reasons why, in spite of the inflation, or indeed because of it, generous Americans should contribute to United China Relief, whose address, by the way, is 1790 Broadway, New York City. His article should serve as a grim warning that we cannot wait indefinitely before rescuing China from her predicament. The inflation comes



Justus in The Sioux City Journal

Their Ears to the Ground

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primarily from a shortage of consumer goods, and we can best help this by opening an accessible route to China over which to send her goods, materials and, most of all, machinery for her own industries. Above everything, what China needs is victory over Japan at the earliest possible moment that is compatible with the grand strategy of the war. The longer the all-out attack on Japan is delayed, the less help we shall be able to get from our gallant Far Eastern ally.

Whitewashing Mr. Drew

New York City has a policeman named James L. Drew who seems to have some queer friends and to have engaged in some queer activities. Mr. Drew was suspended from duty some months ago after he had been investigated and 245 pages of testimony regarding him had been taken. He was charged with "contributing funds to at least four organizations which, according to federal indictments, were engaged in seditious activities." It is said he gave money to help the defense of three persons who have been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of criminal sedition. Among his associates was Joe McWilliams, and Drew told an investigator (whose identity he did not know) that while officially not a member of the Christian Front, "unofficially I have attended meetings in Brooklyn and the Bronx." Masses of anti-Semitic literature were found in his home and his garage. A lengthy report on Drew was forwarded by Mayor LaGuardia to the Attorney General of the United States and the FBI.

Now, however, Police Commissioner Valentine has dismissed all charges against Drew. Thus far Mr. Valentine has failed to give any explanation of his extraordinary act. He certainly owes one to the community. On the face of the facts it would seem as though he were giving the New York City police force, which some time ago was known to have several hundred Christian Fronters in its ranks, carte blanche to indulge in un-American and unpatriotic activities.

The New Deal Must Go On

One of the less happy acts of the President on his return from Teheran was to announce that the "New Deal" as a slogan was no longer appropriate to describe the purposes of his administration, and that something like "Win the War" would be more accurate. We wish to say, as emphatically as we know how, that the President is wrong: wrong in both his assumptions and his methods; wrong in fact and in strategy. The New Deal is something bigger than any one person, bigger even than the President of the United States and the greatest figure in the United Nations. It can be disowned—that is, any person can dissociate himself from it. But it cannot be dropped.

We think we can see why the President made his remark. He has just returned from an epoch-making trip to Cairo and Teheran. While there, he helped plan the movement of millions of men, his mind swept the seven seas and the five continents, he decided the destinies of whole peoples and mapped the history of decades. On his return home he found Congress and the press bogged down over a subsidy program and a tax bill, and the people worrying over trivia and obsessed with parochialisms. Always anxious to brush aside the unessential and strike at the jugular, he saw that the prime necessity was to achieve a national concentration on the war and what was to follow. Since he was asking his opponents to put aside their partisanship, he decided to set them an example by putting aside his own. Since the most vivid symbol of his administration was the New Deal, he threw it into the scrap-pile with a cheerful abandon. It is quite likely, one must add, that in doing so he congratulated himself on making a clever political move as well, given the much advertised reactionary swing of opinion in the country.

Let us start by saying that the President is wrong in his assumption that foreign and domestic policy can be separated. If recent history has shown anything, it has shown that a nation cannot remain for any length of time a split personality. The conduct of the war and of our relations with our allies and with the smaller nations of the world is an expression of the same national mentality which fashions our domestic policy. America entered under the New Deal into what was, for us, in essence a New Deal war—a war to destroy the fascist cancer which was preventing the possible growth of healthy democratic governments anywhere in the world. Despite such misadventures as the episode of Darlanism and its present vestiges in our Italian policy, the administration has had to fight the war and plan for the peace in the spirit of the New Deal. Nothing can underline that fact better than the Cairo and Teheran conferences themselves, which have given a new progressive impetus to the whole task of framing a people's century. What an irony it would be if the President could in actuality abandon the New Deal at home at the very moment when he is committed toward an extension of its spirit and its conception of social progress to the whole world scene. But the fact is that he cannot disengage the domestic from the foreign; he cannot unlock what is locked in the embrace of an organic unity.

Nor is the President on stronger ground if he thinks that his gesture will appease the hostility of the administration's enemies, or allay the bickering and partisanship in the nation today. The fact is that the bickering is none of the administration's making. Long ago, at the moment of our entrance into the war, the President did everything he could to appease his enemies—to our minds he did much more than he had reason for. He placed the crucial army and navy posts in the hands of

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Republicans. He placed the machinery of the war economy in the hands of dollar-a-year business men. He did not protest when Congress cut down appropriations for important social services at home. Any impartial observer of the present political scene knows that in the three storm-centers of domestic policy today—subsidies, taxes and the soldiers' vote—the offensive has been taken by the Republicans and the Democratic tories rather than by the New Dealers. It is they who have prevented the suspension of partisanship, they who have made impossible a political truce during the duration of the war crisis. Having created the partisanship and dissension, they now compel the New Deal to surrender on the ground that partisanship and dissension exist. It is all too reminiscent of the well known story of the man who murdered his father and mother, and then threw himself on the mercy of the court on the ground that he was an orphan.

If it be said that nothing more is involved in the President's statement than the dropping of a slogan—a superficial and ephemeral thing that has outlived its usefulness, the answer must be that the New Deal is and has always been far more than a slogan. It has been a conception of government. It has been a general social direction. It has been a program of social action. The slogan itself may not count for much, although it has been a remarkably effective and has still not lost its potency. But the New Deal as a fact and as an aspiration is the essential thing.

And here we reach the crucial weakness in the President's assumption. He seems to assume that as he created the New Deal, he can drop it and move on to fresh fields and pastures new. To believe this is to miss the whole point of social movements. The President performed a great historic function with respect to the New Deal during the whole past decade. But he did not create it. He sensed and expressed the social energies which the New Deal has embodied. He was the instrument that the American people used in order to bring those energies and aspirations into sharper focus, in order to give them a habitation and a name. Until those energies run out, until those aspirations are completely satisfied or else are suppressed, the New Deal —under whatever name and under whatever leader— will continue to be a living thing, the biggest single fact about our country and our time.

That is our own reading of history and our own declaration of faith. The New Deal is bigger than the man whom history will regard as its creator. The New Deal is bigger than any one man, bigger than any power group or political party. Let us not forget that one of its principal functions has been an educational one—to make the American people (and indeed people all over the world) aware of what a people's government can accomplish if it has the people's energy behind it. That cannot be terminated now by anyone's fiat. Too many millions of people have come to have a stake in the future of such a conception. Too many democratic energies have been awakened by it.

The ironic fact about the whole affair of dropping the New Deal is that, even as a tactical move, it is not a smart one. President Roosevelt has consistently underestimated his popularity in the nation—partly, perhaps, because he has not understood how deeply the roots of his popularity reached down into the deep social movement of which it was an expression. And he seems today again to be falling for the talk of a swing toward the Right in the United States. The swing certainly exists, but there is no evidence that it goes beyond those who are most articulate—Congress, the press and the forces of corporate business. The Republican victories have thus far been local ones, in elections that have been principally distinguished by the falling-off in the vote. All the public-opinion polls indicate that if the presidential election were held today, and if the soldiers were enabled to vote, President Roosevelt would be returned by a majority almost as sweeping as in 1940. In fact, the very anxiety of the reactionaries to keep the soldiers from voting is a give-away of their basic insecurity about the mood of the people themselves.

Throughout the world the swing is not toward the Right, but toward the democratic Left. In Britain the swing of opinion toward the Left has been so marked as to be one of the most drastic changes in British history. In Canada the socialist-minded Coöperative Commonwealth Federation is making converts at a rate that is throwing the reactionaries into a panic. In Australia the Labor Party has returned its government to power with a bigger majority than before. In France, both at Algiers and in the underground on the Continent, the whole trend is toward a more strongly based Popular Front government. If Yugoslavia is any indication of how the Balkan governments will go, it shows a tremendous groundswell toward a Balkan New Deal. Russia has demonstrated that a socialist society can be strong in war as well as in peacetime construction; she is achieving a security that will enable her to add democratic elements to her basic socialism, and her postwar prestige will be enormous. All over the world the winds of opinion and tendency are blowing not away from the New Deal, but toward it.

To think that the American trend is, or can be, for any length of time sharply divergent from this world trend is to be guilty of a new kind of isolationism as treacherous as the old. To judge Americans from their press and their Congress, and to appease the reactionary forces that blow themselves up beyond their real importance, is to be guilty of a new appeasement as treacherous as the old. Isolationism and appeasement never got us anywhere in our foreign policy, and they are worse guides than ever in our domestic policy.

The leaders and parties that ignore this, ignore it at their peril.

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Must We Use Reprisals?

THE ANSWER OF THE NAZIS to the execution of Germans who, during the occupation of Kharkov, had murdered civilians wholesale, is to threaten reprisals by the execution of captured Allied airmen. Some have said that they will scarcely dare to do this, since we have more prisoners than they have. Two extremely dubious assumptions are involved in this comment: first, that the Nazis as they become more desperate would be restrained by what might happen to their captured comrades, and second, that we will as a matter of course follow their example in the use of reprisals which violate the laws of war and the dictates of humanity.

When the Japanese executed captured American airmen, the act was applauded in Germany. The natural anger of Germans against those who are devastating their cities is now being intensified by every device of official propaganda. For instance, it is asserted, though the assertion is without shadow of foundation, that the bombing orders violate international law. No such talk was heard in Germany when British cities were being blasted, from the air. There never has been any international agreement not to bomb cities which are of military importance, any more than there has been one not to subject them to artillery fire. We should have been reluctant to do so if the Germans had not started it, just as we were reluctant to fight at all, but the only legal prohibition is against attack on "open cities," which are recognized as such and are under international control to prevent their usefulness in armed operations.

In spite of the fact that the airmen are soldiers carrying on legitimate warfare at the risk of their lives, they are featured in Germany as gangsters; the names of their planes and the humorous devices painted on them are reproduced and misinterpreted to substantiate this libel. This may be merely the usual propaganda of hatred to reinforce civilian morale, but it may also be a preparation for something more specific. If the Nazi authorities thought that the execution of prisoners of war would help them stave off defeat, they would not hesitate to do it, in spite of what might happen to airmen of their own who, because they are captives, can be of no further use to them in this war. They might think the effect would help them if it should weaken our air attack, either through the intimidation of the fighters themselves or through the reaction of civilians in this country. Hitler has warned us that we have no conception of the measures which he is prepared to take if pressed hard enough.

We may hope that he will not resort to this extreme, but if he should do so, ought we to try to stop him by executing innocent prisoners of war in return? We should not have the slightest legal justification for doing so, since reprisals against the innocent are strictly forbidden by the laws of war. And there is good reason for this rule. First of all, there is no justice in punishing one man for another's guilt. Furthermore, if such reprisals begin, there is no logical end to them until the whole world has descended to the level of savagery. We are fighting Hitler because he has no respect for considerations of this kind, and while we must fight hard and with every legitimate means within our power, we must also preserve the very values for which we are fighting.

This would be true in any case, but its truth is reinforced by the fact that reprisals of this sort would scarcely deter the Nazis, once they had decided to proceed. They would have counted on the possibility that we would retaliate in kind, and they would have decided in cold blood to permit the sacrifice of their soldiers in our hands. In fact, they might even welcome the chance to prove to their armies that they must fight to the death and never surrender. It has been a frequent experience that good treatment of prisoners encourages desertion. Our propaganda in the enemy lines made excellent use of this appeal in the last war, and may be expected to do so in this one as the plight of the German fighters deteriorates.

The only possible deterrent to Hitler would be the conviction that acts of this sort would only make us fight harder and more relentlessly, and the knowledge that those guilty of the murders would certainly be punished after the war, if they lived to fall into our hands. Our anger against the Japanese because of the execution of men who bombed Tokyo was not dissipated in retaliation against defenseless Japanese prisoners, but was channeled into a remorseless resolution to bomb Tokyo again and again, and to win a complete and final victory. We should do far more to discourage this inhuman savagery by showing that it could not in the slightest degree retard our march to victory, than by allowing ourselves to descend to the level of our enemies.

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Inflation in China[1]

A FEW WEEKS AGO I stood on a dusty road bordering a great air base in southern China watching the dark green planes coasting in one after another, all coated with dust from the plains of India. There were bombers, fighters, American transports and, off in one corner, transports marked with the large white Chinese character which is the sign of the China National Airways Corporation.

A truck backed up to the door of one of these planes and took over its cargo of heavy boxes. The boxes contained Chinese banknotes—intravenous injections for the feverish body of economic China. More and more of these boxes arrive every month. Not since 1923 in Germany has the world witnessed an inflation of such proportions as that which exists in China today.

Most of these banknotes—none below $10 (Chinese) any more, because hardly any item in the stores costs less than that—are printed by the American Bank Note Company of New York. They come by ship to India, then by plane into China—*tons* every few weeks.

The immediate problem for the Chungking government is how to speed the printing presses to keep up with prices, which rise roughly 10 percent per month and show few signs of slacking that pace. The amount of currency in circulation today in China is so staggering that the government dares not publish the true figures. One of the government's financial experts told me that a year ago the situation had passed the point at which collapse had seemed inevitable. But China's economy is not collapsing. Not yet.

The legal exchange rate is now 20 Chinese dollars for one American, though diplomats and foreign correspondents are allowed 30 to one. On the black market you get 80 or 90.

The purchasing power of an American dollar, at twenty to one, is down to five cents. It will buy you a half-package of the cheapest kind of cigarettes, or a half-pound of peanuts, or six sheets of cheap typing paper, or a ride on the express bus in Chungking for a few blocks, with enough change left over to buy a box of matches. A new pair of shoes will cost you $60 (U. S.); a shoddy briefcase about $50 (U. S.); a second-hand raincoat about $200 (U. S.). Our first restaurant meal in Chungking cost, for four, $50 (U. S.).

The strange thing is that despite the fact that the Japs occupy the best industrial areas of China, control the railroads and all the ports, so that China cannot import consumer goods from abroad, you find the shops crammed with all manner of luxury items. After our $50-meal, my friends and I wandered along the streets, looking at the labels on the packaged sweets, the imitation Kleenex, the wines and fake liqueurs, the thermos bottles, towels, cigarette lighters, the toilet articles—everything you might want, if you had the price, and nearly all of it from Shanghai or Hong Kong, or from Tokyo itself. The "illegal" trade is enormous between Free China and enemy-occupied territory. The stuff comes up the Yangtze Kiang on junks and sampans, by pony cart and on the backs of coolies, and thousands of Chinese and Japanese are growing rich from this steady trade.

To the People's Political Council, China's nearest approach to a parliament, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek admitted in September that "there is much left to be desired" in enforcement of the price-control program he presented a year ago. That was something of an understatement. Discussions by council members revealed that in some provinces prices had multiplied by 250 since 1937—25,000 percent!

By strenuous effort, the government has been able to keep the price of rice, the basic food, from rising at such a dizzy rate. Had it not done that, millions would now be dead of starvation. Even so, around Chungking, rice tripled in price between March and September of last year, rising from 500 to 1,500 Chinese dollars a picul (110 pounds).

What the government has done is to buy up supplies of rice and resell it to the government workers, who crowd Chungking, at controlled prices, held reasonably low. Otherwise, there would be few government officials and clerks alive today. These are the people, along with the school-teacher class, who are bearing the brunt of the inflation. They are almost the only salaried groups in China and in any country it is always those on fixed salaries whom inflation ruins.

Even the diplomats, whose salaries are high, are having a rough time of it, since they must exchange their money at thirty to one. The ambassador of a great and rich nation, hearing that I had lost most of my clothing in the Burma jungles, offered to sell me one of his shirts. Just then the Ambassador's butler brought in the card of the Polish First Secretary. The Ambassador asked that he be shown in, and cautioned the butler to return the card. Cards are expensive.

One day in October a servant from the Standard Oil house appeared at the door of the American Embassy residence. It seemed that two years ago Ambassador Nelson Johnson had borrowed two meat platters and Standard Oil wanted them back.

Some groups in China are actually better off under the inflation, though not so many as the official government spokesmen like to pretend. It is hard to get a

[1] Comment on this article appears in the editorial section. — THE EDITORS

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Chungking ricksha man to pull you now; he is not anxious for new business when he is already making around $2,000 (Chinese) a month, which is more than most trained civil servants get. Half-naked coolies ride the express bus on which fare is $15.

One night a civil servant revealed, in answer to my perplexed questions, how he was able to keep his family fed and clothed. Like so many others in Chungking, he once lived in Shanghai and had accumulated savings. Now he rents out his money to one of the many technically illegal finance firms, which pays him around 30-percent-per-month interest for its use. The firm, of course, is engaged in speculation. It buys up stocks of drugs, for example, holds them while the price skyrockets, and then sells at enormous profits. These practices, by the way, affect American Air Forces operations inside China to a considerable degree. Cabals of Chinese profiteers are forever attempting to corner the market on such essentials as motor cars, for resale at inflated prices to army purchasing agents.

Recent studies made by the University of Nanking, now at Chengtu, show that big property owners and landlords are as well, or better, off than they were before war. The small, landowning farmer finds his real income is about 10 percent below the prewar level. What the university economists term the "laborer-peddler" class enjoys a rise in prosperity of about 75 percent. On the average the income of a family in this class has multiplied by 38 while his cost of living has multiplied by 22. Real incomes of the merchant, storekeeper class has gone down about 12 percent.

The common soldier and the school teacher, however, as well as many government workers, are reduced to extreme poverty and suffer from malnutrition. I know teachers who are alive only because their friends, including Americans, privately contribute to their income. On September 12, the government authorized special allowances for teachers in the official schools, but these are inadequate. Some of Free China's best writers and artists are too ill and weak to work.

In Chungking now you hear the endless discussions as to whether or not the government should unpeg the Chinese dollar in relation to foreign exchange. The Chengtu economists estimate that the normal, natural rate should be about 270 Chinese dollars to one American dollar, based on the present level of wholesale prices in the two countries. These economists argue that the present artificial rate of exchange adds a financial blockade to the physical blockade of China; that it discourages exports; that it deprives the government of much foreign exchange because foreigners in China are either discouraged from spending or spend in the black market. And finally, that it discourages Chinese who live overseas from sending money to their families in China. But it is extremely unlikely that the government will let its money slide down to its natural level. For one thing, it can buy imports this way very cheaply. For another, the spectacle of Chungking money falling so far might destroy what confidence the country still retains in the government's financial stability.

China's trade with foreign countries, of course, is almost nonexistent now. We gave China a credit of $500,000,000 (U. S.) about a year ago. It could not be used, because there was no trade to speak of. So the latest stunt used to prop up China's tottering financial structure is the importation to China of $200,000,000 of the $500,000,000 in the form of gold bullion. The gold itself will actually be sent to China. And that means by air—a total of 80 to 100 airplane loads—at a time when there isn't cargo space enough for weapons!

Just what the Chinese government will do with the gold was not decided when I left Chungking. They can issue notes upon it or sell gold in the open market, for $10,000 (Chinese) an ounce. It cost them, at the official rate of exchange, $700 (Chinese) an ounce, so they will do a good stroke of business if this policy is followed. If the bullion is sold, much of it will be purchased by those Chinese who have made money on the war, thus making permanent their wartime fortunes. It is certain that in such case much of the gold will find its way into Japanese-occupied territory, which means into the hands, eventually, of the Japs themselves.

The revelation that the American dollar is worth only a nickel in China will upset some of the charitable Americans who contribute to United China Relief. But after long talks with those who administer the relief funds inside China, I am convinced that these contributions are saving the lives and health of many thousands and ought to be increased, if possible.

In the first place, your dollar buys more than a nickel's worth of food, the all-important item. In the Toishan area, near Canton, where famine is ravaging the villages, rice from government stocks can be purchased by the UCR for only $400 (Chinese) a picul, instead of $4,000 (Chinese), the local market price. In the second place, the UCR has had a special agreement since May with the Central Government. For every $100 you send to the UCR, the Chinese government will put in $50. For every $100 marked specifically for famine relief, the government will match it with another $100.

Recently, China has had to resort to taxation in kind to keep the army and the government functioning. Many farmers, even in the famine areas, have seen their entire crop taken from them by the local generals, war lords or magistrates. Often you find a farmer's total production pledged in taxes for years ahead. And so it has happened that relief money has sometimes been used to buy, and give back to starving peasants, the very rice which was taken from them in taxes.

The greatest expense in China is, of course, for the government and the army. Progress is being made, and today 30 percent of the national budget is met by taxa-

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tion, which compares favorably with the United States. Much more could be raised, if the paper plans for inheritance and income taxation were really enforced. That is hard to do in a country governed not by law but by personal influence, and one in which the government is pretty thoroughly in the hands of landlords and financiers.

China's inflation is indeed alarming. But leaders of the government, such as Wu Te-chen, secretary-general of the Kuomintang Party, are convinced that the inflation can continue at its present rate for about two more years before the whole thing collapses. One is inclined to believe him. China is 85 percent an agricultural economy. She is normally self-sufficient in food. The peasants—and that means nearly everybody—will get along somehow, even if they have to discard currency entirely and live by barter. They have done it before.

But when the peasants *do* begin to barter, it will mean they have lost confidence in the government. When that moment comes, Chiang Kai-shek's regime will be really put to the test. No wonder he tries to convince the people that the Allies will have Japan beaten in a year, at which time the ports will reopen and production will begin again. His regime lives on a tightrope now, and if it should fall, no strong central authority would replace it. The country would then return to its old condition of local autonomies and quarreling war lords, and the Allies' task of beating Japan would be immeasurably increased.

Will China's economy, through inflation, eventually collapse? Nobody is quite sure. Everyone is holding his breath. Dr. H. H. Kung, the Finance Minister, put it this way to an American friend: "We are like the man who fell from the top of the Woolworth Building. As he passed the twenty-second floor, he said, 'So far, so good.'"

ERIC SEVAREID

Will Scandinavia Unite?

SCANDINAVIA'S sensitive political barometer once again reached a new low in December with the brutal arrest and subsequent deportation to the Reich of more than a thousand students and teachers of the University of Oslo. But the same event occasioned a new high in inter-Scandinavian affairs. For the German measures caused widespread indignation in all Scandinavian countries. It was in neutral Sweden, however, that Scandinavia's common resentment against Germany could really explode. Student organizations, parliamentary groups, labor circles, religious bodies and Sweden's free press voiced Scandinavian as much as purely Swedish sentiment in protesting Germany's new acts of terrorism in Norway. The Swedish government took another step away from its long cherished policy of neutrality by addressing a "most urgent request" to Germany, asking for the cancellation of the impending deportation order. When Germany rejected this request, the city of Stockholm appropriated a sum of money "to support Norwegian students who may escape to Sweden."

Sweden's stand in the case of the arrested Oslo students is merely one instance in a series of political moves which represent a new departure in inter-Scandinavian affairs. Sweden's sweeping humanitarian gesture of early October, offering asylum to Danish Jews, is another instance in the emerging inter-Scandinavian new deal. It is impossible to appreciaate this trend toward inter-Scandinavian coöperation without recalling the complete breakdown of Scandinavian collaboration after Germany's invasion of Denmark and Norway on the fateful April 9, 1940. Europe's "peace corner," where linguistic, ethnic and religious ties, similar democratic institutions and social reforms as well as identical peace aspirations had made for the closest political interdependence anywhere on the Continent, was engulfed by war and appeared disrupted beyond hope.

The worst feature of Scandinavia's political disintegration in the years after the invasion was the alienation of friendly feelings which had previously existed among the Scandinavian peoples. During the first Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-40 the other three Scandinavian nations supported Finland as far as their neutrality permitted. But with the German invasion all this changed. It is difficult for Americans to appreciate the bitterness which for a long time the Norwegians felt toward their neighbors. There was disappointment over Sweden's failure to send military help. Disappointment turned into resentment when Sweden gave German arms and soldiers the right of way across her territory to Norway. There were numerous other causes for bitterness. The Swedes on their part felt that the Norwegians did not understand Sweden's dilemma *vis-a-vis* Germany's constant pressure for further concessions. They felt that the Norwegians were not sufficiently grateful for such help as was actually given to Norwegian refugees. The Norwegians again complained against the apparent spinelessness of the Danes in submitting to the Germans without a fight. But more than anything else, the Norwegians were bitter over Finland's alliance with Germany.

It is against this background that some of the recent events in Scandinavian politics must be understood. Many sore spots still remain, but the removal of others tends to brighten the picture. Increased Swedish resistance to German pressure is an important item. Sweden's position in the first two years after Germany's

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intrusion into Scandinavian polititcs was difficult indeed. Cut off from her regular markets overseas, she became ever more dependent on Germany. An element of opportunism was admittedly present. A German victory was not out of the question for a long time. But by the spring of 1943, after the Allied landings in North Africa and the successful Soviet winter offensive, Swedish public opinion, never particularly friendly toward Germany, became more articulate. On March 26, 1943, for instance, the liberal newspaper, the Dagens Nyheter, said in an editorial that "there is a strong opinion in this country which holds that the limit has now been reached; that the time has come to end the concessions made in the summer of 1940." By August public pressure had achieved its desired effect on the policy of the Swedish government. On August 15, Sweden suspended the transit traffic of war materials between Norway and Germany. Five days later the leave, or "furlough traffic," from and to Norway, and the so-called "horseshoe traffic" over Swedish lines between Trondheim and Narvik, were halted. On October 1 the Swedish government discontinued the transportation of German oil on the railroads of Sweden. When, toward the end of October, Sweden decided to allow two Norwegian ships, the Dicto and the Lionel, to leave the port of Gothenburg, Germany retaliated by suspending Sweden's "safe-conduct traffic," which had enabled her to have some overseas trade with the consent of both belligerents.

Sweden's resistance to German diplomatic pressure had its counterpart in Denmark where sabotage and violence had already reached large proportions last January. When in the spring the Nazis, for some reason as yet unexplained, permitted elections in Denmark, the vote was essentially to be cast for or against Germany and her puppet government, under Eric Scavenius. The leading parties—the Conservatives, the Farmers' Party, the Left-Wing Liberals (Radikale Venstre) and the Social Democrats—pooled their propaganda and ran joint advertisements asking the public to vote for one of them without any other recommendations. More than two million Danes voted against Germany. The Danish Nazis, in spite of strong financial and other support from Germany, polled less than two percent of the total. After this public repudiation of the German regime, the Danish people became ever bolder in their resistance to Germany's pillage and plunder. On August 28 Germany had to drop her mask in dealing with the Danes. The "model protectorate" had failed to work. The Danish Cabinet, rejecting the eight-point German ultimatum which demanded even closer collaboration than that previously in effect, by its action expressed the Danish people's will to resist. Part of the Danish fleet was scuttled; other units sought refuge in Sweden; Danish troops battled the German army until overpowered and disarmed; and Danish workmen went on strike or intensified industrial sabotage. The Germans retaliated by introducing what the Danes call "Norwegian conditions."

Swedish diplomatic and Danish military and underground resistance to Germany were naturally welcomed by the Norwegian government-in-exile and certainly removed important obstacles that had stood in the path of present as well as future inter-Scandinavian unity. There can be no doubt that Norway will play an important part in Scandinavia's political future. The present actions and intentions of the Norwegian government-in-exile therefore deserve close attention. The Norwegian government in London is not only the strongest and politically the most progressive of all the governments-in-exile, but it is also the closest to the British in view of its services to England during the war. (The Norwegian merchant fleet, fourth largest before the war, is rendering inestimable help in keeping Britain's overseas trade going.) Its democratic intentions after the war are sincere. At the same time it is humble and frankly acknowledges the temporary character of its mandate from the Norwegian people—in contrast to some of the other governments-in-exile.

Nevertheless, there are still important points of friction between the Norwegians and the Swedes. Sweden, in view of her neutral position during the war, will have undue trade advantages over Norway, where recovery from Germany's *Raubwirtschaft* will be comparatively slow. If she should misuse them, Scandinavian unity would be impossible. The Norwegians, having lost more than 50 percent of their tonnage during the war, especially some of their largest whaling ships, are palpably apprehensive. Fortunately, the Swedes have recognized and understood Norwegian fears in this regard and in both word and deed have tried to allay them by stressing Sweden's postwar responsibilities toward her unfortunate neighbors. On September 18, for instance, 68 labor clubs and unions addressed an appeal to the Swedish government, demanding that "a well planned line of action by the state be ready immediately when the war stops." The Swedish government proved its democratic character by following public opinion. On October 18 it asked the Riksdag, through the Finance Minister, Ernst Wigforss, for a preliminary appropriation of 100,000,000 kronor to be used in postwar rehabilitation work in Europe, particularly in the ravaged northern countries.

While all these developments tend to facilitate postwar collaboration, there are differences of national policy among the Scandinavian countries which were intensified during the war. There is, for the time being at least, considerable disagreement between Sweden and Norway over future collaboration with Finland. For Norway her northern neighbor has become an Axis state, while in Sweden there is still strong sentiment for exempting Finland from the category of the aggressors. After the war the Norwegians may be expected to take a strong stand in favor of close co-

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operation with the Great Powers, especially Britain and the United States, while Sweden will be much more reluctant to do so. There is, moreover, an outspoken tendency in Swedish business circles to look upon the Soviet Union as Sweden's great, natural market which hitherto has been neglected. However, it is generally agreed by all Scandinavians that an East-West orientation does not conflict with inter-Scandinavian coöperation. On the contrary, it is recognized that future peace in Scandinavia depends primarily on Anglo-American-Soviet understanding.

On two aspects of inter-Scandinavian politics all countries may be expected to agree. One is that neutrality in the prewar sense of staying aloof from the conflicts of the Great Powers must disappear from foreign policy and international law. Fortunately for inter-Scandinavian coöperation, Sweden, which has succeeded in maintaining her neutrality by building up strong armaments, is gradually recognizing that neutrality will be outmoded in the postwar world. "It is only natural for a small nation," stated Per Edvin Skold, the Swedish Minister for National Defense, recently, "to try to avoid participation in the war . . . but this does not mean that neutrality is preferable after the war when the new world is being built." That the Scandinavian nations after the war will prefer to participate in worldwide international agreements rather than limited regional understandings such as a Scandinavian federation, was recently explained by Dr. Arne Ording, adviser to the Norwegian Foreign Office in London: "Regional treaties will only ensure us to a limited degree, and they will not ensure us against a new war. . . . The possibilities of a lasting peace will mainly be dependent upon the relations between the Great Powers, perhaps above all upon the relations between the Western powers and the Soviet Union." In other words, the new realism in Scandinavian politics is not conducive to a Scandinavian federation, although it envisions Scandinavian unity within a unified world.

HEINZ H. F. EULAU

How to Dodge Your Taxes

IF YOU READ the financial section of your paper very often, you may recently have noticed quite a few advertisements like these: "Excess Profits Exemption Opportunity!" "Excess Profits Exemption Company for Sale!" "Excess Profits Tax Savings Opportunity!" Perhaps one of them goes on to announce: "Midwest manufacturer of technical peacetime product with excellent excess-profits exemption and operating at profit seeks merger with large company." Another may adopt a more coy and insinuating tone: "It may be just as advantageous for you to sell now as it is for us to buy—because we are each in an entirely different category."

But if Congress passes Section 115 of the new tax bill, you won't be noticing these solicitations very much longer. This section, which is one of the most important pieces of tax legislation to be proposed in years, has been completely ignored by the press. It provides that the Commissioner shall disallow any tax benefits from the acquisition of a corporation made on or after October 8, 1940, if he discovers that a principal purpose was "the avoidance of federal income or excess-profits tax by securing the benefits of a deduction, credit, or other allowance." Unfortunately, there seems to be little indication at present that Congress itself realizes the significance of this amendment.

Were Section 115 passed in its present form it would probably constitute an effective plug to one of the most glaring tax-evasion loopholes in the Internal Revenue Code. Section 730, which 115 is designed to amend, stipulates that affiliated corporations may file consolidated tax returns. In other words, if one corporation takes over 95 percent of the voting stock of another company, it is permitted to combine its tax status with that of the subsidiary. On paper this sounds innocuous enough. But to a business man who is itching to squirm out from under his excess-profits tax and make a financial killing out of the war, it's like manna from heaven. If he can manage to acquire a corporation which had high earnings during the tax-base period, but has very low earnings now, he can absorb its excess-profits credit and forget about his tax worries. Whenever his credit from this transaction is exhausted, he can simply buy up another company, and if he's clever enough he can go on fooling Uncle Sam this way for the duration.

Naturally this sort of deal must also benefit the company with the cherished excess-profits credit. Most corporations which are temporarily or permanently on the rocks are only too glad to have their idle facilities taken over by a company with fat profits to share. The financial pages seem to indicate that just as many down-at-the-heel companies set out to attract prosperous ones as vice versa. A flagrant example of this is furnished by the maneuvering of Commercial Credit Company, a large finance concern. In 1941, Commercial Credit was better off than many other investment companies; it had an excess-profits credit of $15,900,000 and an excess-profits net income of $15,700,000. But its earnings were already declining rapidly. By the middle of 1942 they were down to half as much as in 1941, and this year they have fallen even lower. On the expectation of an ample excess-profits credit, Commercial Credit started shopping around for war babies in June, 1942. By the early part of 1943 it had acquired an en-

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gineering corporation, a packing plant, a manufacturing company, a plumbing-supply concern, a machine-tool company, a metal-working corporation and a company making durable goods. The combined excess-profits net incomes of these subsidiaries came to about $4,100,000, and their combined excess-profits credits totaled only $837,000. Their tax savings on Commercial Credit's declining income have been tremendous, and Commercial Credit is getting its share of their profits. In fact, no one stands to lose on this arrangement but the Treasury.

But business men who wish to dodge their corporate taxes need not worry very much about the fate of Section 730. They have plenty of other tax-evasion schemes up their sleeve, and there are numerous other loopholes in our tax laws which the new tax bill leaves wide open. Treasury experts have repeatedly urged the closing of these loopholes, pointing out that stringent anti-tax-evasion amendments might be expected to bring millions of dollars in additional revenue.

Section 165, for instance, provides that employers can deduct pension-fund payments from their taxes. Amazingly enough, as soon as pension funds were made tax-exempt, many large industrialists seemed to have suddenly developed a humanitarian interest in the welfare of their employees—or at least, a few favored employees in the upper salary brackets. The Bureau of Internal Revenue discovered that quite a number of pension funds showed a tendency to deviate from their benevolent purpose. One fund covered only 321 employees out of 25,000; in another company only 4 out of 21 employees were taken into the trust; while other instances were found where the fund covered exactly 60 out of 25,000 employees—.024 percent.

Last year's tax bill contained some belated amendments designed to prevent this wholesale use of pension funds to reward stockholders and special employees with tax-free dividends and bonuses. Two major changes were inaugurated; all contributions must now be made proportional to each employee's salary, and each fund must cover at least 56 percent of all employees (or if it includes less, payments must be scaled down to Social Security rates).

Some corporation lawyers have gone to great lengths in legal magazines to demonstrate that these amendments have ended the tax-evasion possibilities of Section 165—but don't let them fool you. Clever business men can still use pension trusts to beat their taxes. Since the amendments merely provide that contributions must be *relatively equal*, an employer can kick in the same fixed percentage of all salaries, from low-paid workers to key executives. Assuming that he decides to contribute 10 percent, payments might range from $300 for a person earning $3,000 annually, to $50,000 for an executive drawing $500,000 yearly. Within this range there is plenty of room for the creation of a huge tax-deductible reserve. The Treasury has proposed a ceiling of $7,500 on each contribution to eliminate this hitch. But business has effectively blocked the adoption of so "radical" a proposal. At present, there is no effective limitation on the size of tax-exempt pension trusts. Nor is there any prohibition against the premature termination of trusts, which would favor higher-paid officers.

The tax advantages of the pension-trust scheme are not confined to employers; they work both ways. Suppose an executive now earning $100,000 yearly has just been promised a raise of $10,000. If he takes his raise as direct salary it will be subject to the 60-percent upper-bracket tax. But realized indirectly through the company's pension fund, it will not only be tax-exempt; it will constantly accumulate. In 20 years it will have reached at least $200,000. Even assuming that present tax rates have not been reduced by then, the executive will stand to gain, for he'll be taxed on the lower-bracket rate, and get about $10,000 annually instead of $4,000, which is all he could expect now.

This arrangement suits the company, since by escaping its present high taxes, it can purchase a valuable pension trust at relatively low cost. Under a 90-percent excess-profits tax, corporations pay only 10 cents on each dollar put into the fund. How does this work out? A glance at part of X Corporation's P & L Statement will make it clear:

Normal profits	$100,000 less 40% tax	$60,000
Excess profits	$ 50,000 less 90% tax	$ 5,000
Left after taxes		$65,000

If X Corporation takes $10,000 out of its excess profits to establish a pension trust, its P & L Statement assumes the following proportions:

Normal profits	$100,000 less 40% tax	$60,000
Excess profits	$ 40,000 less 90% tax	$ 4,000
Left after taxes		$64,000

X Corporation has set up a pension trust of $10,000 *at an actual cost of $1,000*. The government has subsidized the rest, in taxes which it cannot recover. X Company might reap a still greater tax advantage by linking its trust to the profit-sharing plan.

Like all other forms of corporate tax evasion, the scheme by which companies in the oil, coal and mining industries manage to dodge their taxes is perfectly legal. Section 114 allows these companies to base their depletion reserves on a fixed percentage of gross income, rather than on their actual capital investment. If you happen to be an accountant, the illogicality of this provision is obvious. If you're not, the catch is easily explained: when depletion is based on cost, the depletion reserve must be closed out as soon as the entire cost is recovered. But under percentage depletion, the taxpayer can regain his original capital invest-

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ment many times over and still claim tax exemption for depletion. Randolph Paul has emphasized this perpetual-motion aspect of percentage depletion: "There is no limit to percentage depletion. It runs on year after year without any regard to the amount which has been allowed to the taxpayer. Percentage depletion as it now stands is completely divorced from the fundamental purpose of a depletion allowance."

Treasury officials estimate that the substitution of cost for percentage depletion would bring in an extra $124,000,000 in taxes. The figures contained in a report already submitted to Congress help to explain how this money is disappearing right now. For example, they show that in 1941, 78 oil companies deducted $30,600,000 as depletion for tax purposes, yet reported only $6,100,000 to their stockholders.

The ease with which a corporation can evade its taxes through percentage depletion is vividly illustrated by the balance sheets of four oil companies taken at random. By reporting its depletion to the government on a percentage instead of a cost basis, Corporation A, with an actual net income of $4,200, showed for tax purposes a deficit of $5,000; Corporation B, with a net income of $1,300, showed a deficit of $5,900; Corporation C, whose income was $4,000, reported a taxable income of only $800; and Corporation D, with an actual income of $3,400, was able to report an income of only $6 to the Treasury!

These amazing discrepancies are partly caused by the fact that rates allowed for percentage depletion considerably exceed the true rates based on cost depletion. In 1940, for instance, the percentage-depletion rate for oil was 28 cents a barrel, while the cost-depletion rate was only 5.9 cents a barrel.

In order to get the hog's share out of percentage depletion, business men are taking advantage of another loophole in the law (Section 23-m) which allows them the option of charging as expense certain intangible development costs. Since the amount of deductible percentage depletion remains the same after these costs have been "expensed" and already deducted, the taxpayer actually realizes a double deduction for each cost. To stop the widespread "expensing" of intangible costs for tax-evasion reasons, the Treasury has recommended that these costs be capitalized. Such an amendment would net about $87,000,000 in additional taxes.

Public utilities also have their own special loophole to squeeze through. According to Section 26-h, an amendment written into the Code last year, utilities can reduce their surtax by an amount equal to current and accrued dividends paid on their preferred stock. Utilities had clamored for this surtax reduction on the grounds that their common stockholders were being forced to bear a disproportionate share of the corporate tax burden. Whether you accept this argument or not—its opponents contend that the government should not be forced to subsidize the high dividend commitments which an unwise management has allowed to accumulate—it is evident that the amendment enables certain utilities to make windfall profits through tax evasion. For although it was intended primarily for the benefit of companies whose earnings have not increased during the war, a preliminary government tax return shows that two-thirds of the dividend deductions allowed last year went to corporations with excess profits. These utilities can escape a large part, or all, of their excess-profits tax simply by paying their entire accrued dividends in one year.

Scratch the surface of the "postwar-planning" campaign now being carried on by the NAM and its affiliates, and you'll find the latest wrinkle in business' tax-evasion plans. The flashy banners and well turned slogans are all designed to impress one argument upon the public: after the war ends our economy will remain at dead center unless private industry is in a position to supply an immediate power stroke. Therefore, business must be allowed now to build up substantial, highly liquid reserves which it can use to lubricate our economic machinery during the postwar period. These reserves would be tax-exempt, probably requiring a new loophole to be written into the law.

This argument is a subtle one and, dressed up by the NAM's professional pamphleteers, it sounds almost good enough to be convincing. But you don't have to probe very far to discover that all of its assumptions are way off base. Its major premise is that business profits have been taxed nearly out of existence; its minor one that the government has made no provision to help business meet the costs of financing the postwar period. What are the actual facts?

Corporate profits, far from having wasted away under the "enormous" drain of our present excess-profits taxes, are higher than ever before. This year business men had nearly $23,000,000,000 worth of profits left, not counting dividends received. Quite an advance from 1936-39, when average net profits were considered high if they came to slightly over $4,000,000,000; even the peak average of 1940-42 was only about $14,000,000,000. Next year's net profits before taxation are expected to hit $24,000,000,000. After taxes and net dividends have been paid off, corporate balance sheets will show an aggregate income of $5,000,000,000 for 1943. This is nearly $5,000,000,000 more than they recorded in 1939, and over two and a half billions higher than average balances from 1940-42. By the time all corporations have paid off their 1944 taxes and dividends, they will have accumulated about $15,000,000,000 of undistributed profits since our entrance into the war. Statistics show that war profits have boosted corporate income after taxes nearly $16,000,000,000 above its prewar average. Strangely enough, a much greater share has gone to the large-sized corporations now demanding reconversion reserves than to smaller ones.

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Business men who worry about the liquidity of these earnings apparently don't keep very close track of their own bank balances. For the Survey of Current Business indicates that business' liquid assets—currency, bank deposits and government securities—increased by $19,000,000,000 during 1941 and 1942, and have increased by about $14,000,000,000 this year. These assets alone should provide plenty of seed money with which to finance reconversion, even if the war should end tomorrow.

The NAM brochures neglect to mention that the government has already guaranteed effective reserves to business. Last year's tax bill provided that if a manufacturer sustains a loss in any year, he can offset it against his income during the two preceding, or the two following, years. Business men are also permitted to carry back or forward any unused portion of their current excess-profits credit. In either case, the manufacturer is eligible for substantial tax refunds. Corporations already have enormous invisible reserves in the form of wartime profits. Applied through the flexible technique of the carry-back provisions, these reserves should prove ample to meet the exigencies of the post-war period. Business, however, has one main objection to these invisible reserves: they are not tax-exempt.

Many big manufacturers, consequently, are now bringing pressure to bear on Congress for the enactment of a provision which will allow them to establish the kind of reserves they want. In the meantime, business is stretching the already existing loopholes in the law for all they're worth. The unqualified passage of Section 115 would close one of the worst of these loopholes. But until Congress gives serious attention to the others, the Bureau of Internal Revenue must continue to rely on litigation, which is expensive and unsatisfactory at best. It looks as though, for the time being, certain business men will be allowed to keep right on giving the country the run-around. ALLAN SPALDING

Movies in Wartime[1]

THE PROBLEM that faced American movie producers from the moment the United States entered the war, which pushed the reluctant industry into declarations as to the nature of the times, was to make clear to movie audiences as much of the problems of fascism and democracy and the struggle between them as can be handled by movies. Since December 8 the movie people have been pecking away at the problem, mostly at the outside of it, but diligently and without stint. In order to show a fascist demagogue, they presented some of his mannerisms, like his salute, a great deal of theatrical brutality and hot temper, a few of his desires for a Nazi world, a small part of the psychology and background that produced him. The movie battlefield has been without exception a neat, heroic and orderly corner of what a real battlefield must be like; one that has exploded realistically enough but never very unpleasantly. Their Americans have been trouble-shooting automatons, licking a hundred times their weight in Nazis and Japanese; the other fighters of the United Nations haven't been so ingenious, but they have been friendly, industrious and uncomplainingly good people. Everything else that the movies have shown as part of the Allied war effort can be summed up as highly complimentary to it, and anything that has had to do with the fascists, highly uncomplimentary.

The war movie today is appreciably less mawkish, melodramatic and naïve than the films that were made in the First World War. But this progress is only an advance in degree; the house has essentially the same framework, though its surface appeal is less silly, more direct, fresh and simple. Inherent, though, is still the melodramatic attitude, patriotic narrowness and glibness all around, no problem or character ever being encountered in all of its aspects or implications. To understand why this framework must remain, no matter who is building it—Dudley Nichols, William Wellman, Nunnally Johnson or Howard Hawks (who are obviously just as aware of the problem as any of us are)—will demand all the well worn facts of the Hollywood business. Let it suffice to say that it is a whole set of effects and counter-effects arranged to produce films that needn't say—in fact almost never do say—what anyone actually, sincerely believes to be the truth.

The technique that has been used to present the problem has been, in the majority of cases, that of the Western film, where psychological, economic and social factors are subordinated almost out of sight to chase-fight, chase-fight, chase-fight and final victory for the hero over the villain despite insurmountable odds. To have discussed fascism on any higher level than this would have made things more difficult than Hollywood likes them, and would, moreover, have brought into play all the forces of which it is most in fear, among them censorship and the supposed feverish resentment of the paying public for anything other than entertainment. The intense activity and heroics of the Western provided Hollywood with a camouflage in which there was a great deal of milling about. It abounds in villains, and so offers a convenient receptacle for Nazis; it gives a pleasant illusion of war, in which killing

[1] This is the third of a series of articles on American civilization in wartime. The fourth will be "Science in Wartime," by Gerald Wendt.—THE EDITORS

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and destruction, in the midst of mystery, love and shenanigans, seem hardly real. If you decide, as the movie people did, that all you are going to show of fascism is its military aggression, then the Western offers a simple, black-and-white-version of what happens to people who take what doesn't belong to them.

What has been most lacking is a forthright, informing portrait of the authoritarian character. The Nazis in movies have been either all black or all white, and in either case unsubstantiated. The common soldiers are unmitigated thugs and killers; the highest officers often have been, amazingly, brave, independent, civilized men, who were just barely distinguishable from the highest type of democrat. This interesting case of the Good Nazi is no doubt the result of a feeling that an all-black Nazi is too much of a stock type, too unbelievable and too inhuman. But in making the Nazi more humanly complex, the only psychological construction they could rearrange him into was one composed of the qualities which made their heroes, and he came out simply a good man. Their aim in making a more human Nazi was to make a more rational human being, whereas the Nazi, in fact, is most understandable as a human being acting on his irrational drives. Hollywood has always been averse to exploring or admitting the irrational aspects of human beings, and especially averse to discussing the kind of society that will force those irrational traits into dominating the entire character. This refusal to supply the Nazi with an adequate framework has led to a general vagueness as to just what a Nazi is, a fact strikingly brought out in the only movie Hollywood has made in which there is admitted to be such a person as a homegrown fascist—"The Keeper of the Flame." The astounding fact about the fascist in this movie is that no one knew he was a fascist, and he was the most renowned person in America.

In an anxious relationship like that of Hollywood to the public, which is rather like the one between a child and the parent whom he wishes to please, the level of Hollywood's behavior will approximate the level of the public's response. The public's response has often been disastrously irresponsible. This was apparent in the most important of wartime movie polls (that taken by Film Daily), in which the nation's movie commentators were asked whether they thought Hollywood should deal with controversial issues. More than a third of them (38 percent) thought not—"No," said one, "let's keep controversy away from our shores as long as possible." Or, one thought the screen should treat controversial issues of the day "if the facts are presented in such a way as not to influence the opinions of moviegoers one way or another." In a medium that is so delicately tuned not to provoke its audience, this 38 percent of the nation's film authorities can sometimes become the voice of the majority—the voice that is echoed by the vice-president of Paramount when he says, "My company carefully avoided injecting any political or controversial material into this picture."[1] The picture, "For Whom the Bell Tolls." But as a rule the effect of expressed opinions is more insidious than this, for it usually causes the producers to demand of their writers and directors just the amount of the sugary element that will in each picture flavor whatever of reality the writer or director would like to express. It is the denaturing ingredient that changes the castor oil into orange juice with a slight castor-oil flavor.

The movie audience's desires are to a great extent that of the school teacher who would really like to let her students use their own ways of working out a problem, but is unable to leave them alone for fear they won't all get the right answer. Mrs. Edna R. Carroll, the chairman of the Pennsylvania State Board of Motion Picture Censors, warned the movie people that " 'Desert Victory' and 'Prelude to War' must both be considered from the angle of spreading a particular doctrine or a system of principles—in short, they are propaganda films, and all such excursions into the field of propaganda via the movies are part of a pattern of regimentation which is diametrically opposed to representative, free government." This is the voice of the censor, one of Hollywood's biggest problems. Then there is the exhibitors' voice, another practical concern of the industry, which is continually rancorous, querulous and doubtful. Their chorus is that there are "too many war pictures; we want more musicals and comedies." But their remarks are always mixed with uncertain statements like this: "In spite of too many war pictures, this one, 'Commandos Strike at Dawn,' was an exception and drew a fairly good crowd. It is queer that once in a while a war picture will draw a good crowd, and I can never guess ahead of time which one it will be."

Also, above the exhibitors and the censors, are constant threats from die-hards in Congress that the country should do something about these "propaganda movies"—the last one being the Ploeser resolution demanding a congressional investigation of such pictures. Variety's statement was that the resolution "should make the men in pictures realize that Congress does not recognize for the industry the same rights of free expression and free opinion which newspapers, radio and other businesses have."

In trade journals ominous notes appeared. From The Hollywood Reporter: "Dies, Tenney and others who have taken the trouble to look deep into the activities of many of our writers and the groups that surround them are of the most definite opinion that those boys and girls are out to get communism on the screen, IF they can. BUT whether they know it or not, there are a lot of hands that handle the script before it goes to the production stage and there are more executives

[1] For this and other quotations, as well as for many facts and figures, I am greatly indebted to Variety.

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and producers to stop such writing than there are writers to write it." The confusion as to what movie artists can or cannot say ended in such travesties as that surrounding "The North Star" in which the producer censored his writer's script for mention of communism, the Hearst press excoriated the producer for mentioning communism, and the film's most ardent upholders praised it for not having any communism whatsoever.

The war movie comes in four shapes: the in-praise-of-a-branch-of-the-service film; half-fiction, half-historic accounts of actual battles; a kind that in the early part of 1943 threatened to swamp the exhibitors, which shows the resistance of native populations in Europe to the conquerors; and home-front films. The first and second produced the best pictures, the fourth the worst and the third the most.

The ingredients of all servicemen films are identical psychologically. The central character, whether he is a bombardier in a Flying Fortress or the captain of a United Nations ship sailing supplies to Murmansk, has by the end of the picture become a hero of the war no matter how he started—as a sulker, the brother of the captain's hated rival, or an idiot. These heroes are treated in groups rather than as individuals, and though they are given a democratic texture of names like Winocki, O'Doul, Feingold and Ramirez, they are given only one personality. Winocki-O'Doul-Feingold-Ramirez is a man of average looks, on the handsome side, very friendly, short on ideas and emotions, philosophically on the Saroyan side of the street and capable of trading you a wisecrack. At an early point in the picture the hero finds he is fighting a righteous war, because he sees the Germans or the Japanese taking blood from children to use for their own soldiers, firing on survivors of ships they have torpedoed, behaving ruthlessly in Pearl Harbor or Czecho-Slovakia, ripping up a painting by Picasso or the house that Tolstoy lived in.

The only conflicts in the pictures arise out of someone's discontent with the way things are going, *e.g.*, that he should have been promoted instead of flunked out of pilot school, that he is too conceited, surly and know-it-all to be liked, or that he is asked to be officer of the day too many times in a row. And all this has a rotten effect on the group's morale. This conflict is resolved during the first battle, when the unruly one awakens to the fact that the Germans or the Japanese are bestial, that he would rather be fighting them than leave the service for a shore job, or when he finds that the captain is not the hard-boiled egg he supposed, because the captain asked him to play parchesi. The tolerance of this American is exhibited by his love and care for a dog, which he finds or is given by another group, and which he often calls Tojo or Hirohito. Usually there is a father in the battle whose son is killed, or has to have his leg cut off, which is meant to imply that the war is as grim as could be imagined; and there is a mother, wife or sweetheart at home to read a letter from one of the soldiers, to show that the home front is behind the boys and to show the importance of the family tie. Death and destruction in war are diluted almost out of sight by various devices. Only one of the group would be killed, and so the death was hardly noticed, or the emphasis turned from individual dying to mass slaughter so that it became no longer a matter of men dying but endless streams of extras running wildly out into the open and falling down. Death would be further sterilized by switching immediately to more heroics, intense activity or scenes with a merry note.

This does not add up to saying that all the war movies are bad. It would be closer to say that they are all slight. Their scope in no way admitted all of the material that should be encountered in dealing with the problems they set up. Many of the best films took original material that was superficial and tawdry and made the best they could out of it—this was the case with "Bataan," "Air Force" and "Sahara," which gave a good idea of the nature of the fighting and of the terrain. In them the living from moment to moment in war was splendidly realized; there were pieces of good dialogue and the beginnings of fine characterization. Yet it was all like a cheap watch that is kept running by expert attention but is doomed nevertheless to a short and not too happy life. There were films that started with sincere grasp of an actuality, but for one reason or another saw fit to erect an artificial, inadequate structure around it. Still, in films of this nature, like "Wake Island," the main procedure —the nature of one battle in the war—is still discernible and informative. The work of expert hands was always noticeable: the production handling of Nunnally Johnson on "The Moon Is Down," that of Hawks and Tay Garnett on everything they direct, the writing of Dudley Nichols, Robert Andrews and Lillian Hellman. Players like Humphrey Bogart, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Lloyd Nolan projected in look and gesture a strength of character that made up for much of the content lost in the script, though naturally their talents projected only humanity and not ideas. The virtue of an otherwise dull movie of how the Czechs struck back at the Nazis and their mad hangman Heidrich was that the producers of "Hangmen Also Die" stated forcefully how much they hated Nazis and the weight of this emotion was, within its scope, completely convincing. Despite everything, Hollywood's mass of film will leave to posterity the greatest mirror of a kind that has ever been left of a war.

Though there was muttering in various quarters (including this one) about the quality of war films, and though the public itself was heard to complain, it

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at the same time encouraged what it was getting. When, in the poll of the movie commentators mentioned before, the question was asked as to whether too many war pictures were being made, there were 42 percent who thought not, but did think, with Archer Winsten of The New York Post, that there were "not too many but too many routine ones." The 58 percent who thought there were too many war pictures had often the same thing to say: "Yes [no war pictures], but principally because there have been so many shoddy, cheap, downright bad war pictures." In spite of these judgments and the constant pleading of the motion-picture exhibitors to please stop making war films, the fact is that few war pictures of better Hollywood quality have failed since the war started to be what the box-office statisticians label an outstanding hit. In 1942 alone, this included twenty-one pictures. "Mrs. Miniver" made $5,000,000 in 1942, "Sergeant York" had made $4,000,000 in 1941, and "So Proudly We Hail" was on the way to doing that well in 1943.

In fact, the confusion of criticism and suggestion was further confused by the fact that "Mrs. Miniver" and "Wake Island" were the public's favorites last year, the latter by the men, the former by the women and the children. (The children are extremely interesting: in the poll of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures they caused consternation by voting "King's Row," which was a grim movie concerning psychiatry, sadism and incestuous fathers and daughters, as the fourth-best picture of the year, after the newspaper critics had roundly upbraided it: what they say about war pictures is well summed up by a conversation about a typical film of this kind. Eleven-year-old girl: "Little children in 1A, 2A, 3A are afraid of war pictures"; thirteen-year-old boy—"If they see these pictures they will learn not to be scared—five, six years old, they got to learn some time.") Obfuscating the enormous popularity of "Mrs. Miniver" were the nation's soldiers, who went to thirty other films more often than they went to "Mrs. Miniver," which they seemed to dislike violently, but no more so than "In Which We Serve," which the New York Film Critics judged the best of the year.

The agitated perplexity of the exhibitors is understandable; but there seemed no reason in the war years for them to take their perplexity seriously. People went to see anything. The figures for the 1942 year of the war shows that four and a quarter million more people went to the movies *weekly* than went in 1941, for five and a half cents more on an average for a ticket. In 1941 the seven major film companies had made $36,000,000 more than they had in 1939 (when the foreign market was still there). For every twelfth American there was a movie seat—the others stood outside and waited for him to get up. The hardest time to get in was at 7:30 p. m. on Sunday.

The character of the movie audience has changed radically during the war years. It no longer seems to be the silent, rapt mass it once was: there is a noticeable quality of more or less cynical detachment, it has become a little more like the audience at a ball park where the crowd is broken up into pockets of people who do not give up their personality wholly to the spectacle but in one form or another express their own reactions—moviegoers nowadays are running conversations with one another, criticizing the film while watching it, taking the whole thing far less seriously than formerly. The reasons, and there are many, must have largely to do with the war: people have more money and are less fiercely intent on getting the most for it; they are living outside the settled equilibrium of home existence; they are going more frequently, less to see the movie than to get somewhere simply to sit down (this is particularly sadly applicable to servicemen and their girls); the crowds are younger and less frozen; longer hours of work for parents make the movie theatres improvised nurseries; and perhaps most of all, a curious atmosphere that wartime is to some extent vacation time, a transition period in which life is not quite the same as it has been before.

The attitude of the audience showed itself in many odd ways. Prices could be raised as much as twenty cents in some cities and attendance would still increase. As people made more money, the attendance at neighborhood houses fell off, because the people preferred theatres showing the latest movies and charging the highest admissions. The plight of the small theatres, it was said, was equally the result of the blackout—an inability to see such theatres as well as the fear of housewives to venture into less frequented, dimmed-out streets. Vandalism hit a peak in ferocity. One man was stopped in a New York theatre who had an upholsterer's knife on him; when questioned by the police, he said he was going to rip up all the seats. Drapes were being hauled down and pushed into toilets, in some cities it became popular to put lighted cigarettes into the seats—which was so successful in the Campus Theatre in Berkeley, California, that it burned to the ground. Smoldering chairs were found in the State Theatre in Oakland on four successive nights, and the manager of an El Paso, Texas, theatre strode the aisles with a shotgun to keep order. People in Boston complained that young males removed their hats less and less. The theatres' position in the morality of the community was equivocal: the United Automobile Workers wanted them to stay open from one to five-thirty a.m. so that defense workers would be kept away from drink, while the Good Government Club of St. Louis moved that they close at ten p. m. so that the residents would buy more war stamps, get more sleep and stop drinking.

In Hollywood itself the war has made many changes. By 1943 one of the most peculiar and important war-

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time effects was that some thirty former script-writers had become directors and producers. Their first efforts proved to be serious undertakings which were more like novels or plays than the movies had ever been before. Once more the stage and everything in it came to Hollywood; from Broadway came stage producers, the entire Theatre Guild and every play and musical comedy in sight. Leading men were scarce as hen's teeth, and actors who had been in retirement for years were coming back. The studios were having trouble getting enough Japanese-looking males for battle scenes —you were seeing the same little man die five times in one movie—and enough extra men who looked big enough and strong enough to act American soldiers. In the confusion of the question as to whether or not to make war pictures, musicals became more popular than they had been in the peak year of the early talkies, and dancers were at a premium. Any orchestra venturing into Hollywood came out minus half its members, who stayed behind at good pay to dub in music. Hollywood also met the mysterious demand for horror pictures, but no one surpassed Universal, and no one surpassed Variety in describing what Universal was doing: "Universal to toss Wolf Man and Ghost of Frankenstein into one horrendous grapple. Lon Chaney Jr. who played monster in both pictures to clinch with himself."

The contribution of the movies toward entertaining troops, selling bonds and instructing newly recruited factory workers, was of a size that only Hollywood achieves. By June, 1943, 2,000 actors had made 13,000 camp appearances, 3,000 bond-selling tours, 300 special films for the government—the first on sex hygiene, the last, "Battle Formations"—the "Rifle Platoon." Twelve hundred 16mm. prints of current pictures were circulating to troops overseas, which made 7,000, all told, in circulation. The Hollywood canteen had entertained approximately 1,000,000 servicemen since its opening; motion pictures were training aircraft workers faster than they had ever been trained before.

The most significant work in motion pictures during the war has been contributed by official government information services in England, Russia, Canada and this country which have communicated the actual life and temper of the war in factual films. Even this documentary arm, which is the only one on the movie body that is alive and comparatively free, is forced to function within the social and political boundaries that prevailing opinion in each country sets for it. But within these boundaries the artist is given the freedom and means to express his subject matter with all the power and persuasion he possesses, and on the whole the limits have allowed material that is more adult and sensible than what is permitted in Hollywood. In the documentary film there is a quality of straight, level communication with the audience on as high a level as the makers of the film know and it is this direct honesty that marks the principal difference of the documentary from the Hollywood film.

The documentaries have been made in England, Canada, Russia and by the Signal Corps in this country. Among the finest have been the Russian "Moscow Strikes Back" and "Siege of Leningrad." There have been a great number of significant English films, the prize specimens probably being "Desert Victory," "Target for Tonight," "Listen to Britain" and "The Silent Village." Documentaries in Canada have concentrated on an editorialized newsreel compilation ("World in Action" series) which has been the only one to view the war consistently as a worldwide affair rather than a narrow, nationalistic one, and the only one to interpret its patterns as they progressed. Here, the Signal Corps, under the direction of several Hollywood artists like Capra, Litvak and Keighley have produced what many people feel is the best American work in years ("Prelude to War," "Battle of Britain," "Battle of Russia"). For the first time the importance of the documentary has been brought home to the great mass of moviegoers, and it must certainly be the most signficant assault so far on the myth that surrounds movies—that there is one and only one kind of movie of any worth, Hollywood's. It provides, too, as witness the sudden swerve to naturalism taken by recent Hollywood war films, the competition that Hollywood so long needed. This information-film production has trained thousands of new movie technicians, whose entrance into the field indicates that we may expect a wider, more varied postwar movie world.

The war has once more pointed up the need for complete freedom from repression for the movie artist, and also the incongruous fact that in a war where freedom is the most prominent word, the most popular medium of expression is nowhere free. Censorship, as always, has been the real villain of the war-movie piece, and it is responsible for the war movie that seems never to start from inside the individual but from a filing cabinet of accepted forms. My own idea is that the movies cannot well remain exactly as they are now; the balance that has been maintained among the forces of big money, censorship and artists is becoming an imbalance, and one that I think is being affected predominantly by the striking importance of the war documentary. Hollywood artists who were not supposed to care for or want to work in anything but the accepted style of commercial cinema have shown that when given a chance at anything else they take it and produce work far above their Hollywood average. I do not think it likely that all of these artists will return to Hollywood and take up contentedly where they left off; nor do I think it probable that the movie world will be so completely dominated by Hollywood after the war. Meanwhile, the coming attraction is going to be pretty much like the one you saw last week.

MANNY FARBER

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Washington Notes

End of a Session

WHEN PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT goes before Congress in about a week to give his formal report on the Stalin-Churchill-Chiang talks there are now indications that he will also give vent to a growing irritation over the domestic front, for which Congress is very largely responsible. And it is just possible that by the time Congress reconvenes on January 10, after talking to the voters, it may be in a slightly chastened mood. The plain fact is that Congress has been going too far; even for reaction there is a limit.

The story of the first session of the Seventy-eighth Congress is now complete. Here is a brief recapitulation, for the sake of the record. It killed the National Youth Administration, the National Resources Planning Board, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation; it let the Guffey coal act expire, and slashed funds of the OPA and the OWI. It stripped rural resettlement and crop insurance from the Farm Security Administration, emasculated grade labeling and is now gunning for the FCC. It repealed the President's $25,000 salary-limitation order, slashed the Treasury's tax program to one-fifth, and proposed to emasculate the contract-renegotiation law, opening the sluice to huge war profiteering.

Until it was halted by a national outcry, Congress seemed bent on ending all food subsidies and on preventing soldiers from voting. As the servile puppet of pressure groups, it has voted favors to the petroleum interests, the dairy interests and many others. It passed bills of attainder against Goodwin Watson, William E. Dodd and 73-year-old Professor Robert Morss Lovett, who gave a son in World War I.

Even more significant is the fact that this Congress is almost wholly negative; it has shown no leadership for constructive planning in world crisis. It killed the federal aid-to-education bill, halted the prescribed increases of old-age and unemployment-security funds, and met the recommendation for an "American Beveridge Plan" by ignoring the report and killing the National Resources Planning Board, which offered it.

Congress has set up its own bottleneck "committee on postwar planning" under Chairman George, which did nothing from March to November, and now seems only interested in freezing the big profits in war contracts. Last April President Roosevelt appealed to Congress for a $7,700,000,000 federal-state-local postwar public works program; last May he asked for an initial $85,000,000 to get the program into the blueprint stage; in September, in a letter to Majority Leader McCormick, he asked for quick action on a river and harbor bill of postwar projects. He hasn't yet had any response on any of these matters.

There are signs that the public is getting fed up with Congress. It isn't that the administration is getting popular by contrast, but that the sheer ineptitude, partisanship and cowardice of Congress are beginning to worry the home folks, the kind of family that has a service flag in the front window. And the queer thing about it is that all this time a breath of liberalism is running through many of America's fighting allies. The Chinese and Russian masses know that victory holds better prospects for them. New Zealand and Australia have Labor governments which came through autumn elections with flying colors. In Canada the successes of the radical CCF (Coöperative Commonwealth Federation) are scaring the life out of the older parties and forcing a new approach to postwar problems. In Britain, the common man's demand for a better postwar world has taken shape in the Beveridge Plan. Only America is fighting under the lusterless banner of "Status Quo"; only America has "peace panics" on the stock market; only America has the Seventy-eighth Congress.

Mr. Roosevelt's implied criticism of Congress in his Christmas broadcast, following his rather ostentatious scrapping of his "New Deal" label, is interpreted by some here as the start of the fourth-term candidacy. Without going that far, it is still possible to say that rarely has a Congress made such an opening for executive jibes and that if Mr. Roosevelt wants to, he will know what to do.

The decision to substitute Eisenhower for Marshall as actual cross-channel invasion general was finally reached after Teheran, when the realistic Stalin repeatedly indicated that he could not place final confidence in Anglo-American plans until the leader was picked. Marshall was the original choice, but it was finally decided that this would have unwisely taken him out of his global sphere and tied him down to a specific battlefront, breaking up the "team" of Marshall-Arnold-King-Leahy. It is almost impossible to exaggerate strong-man Marshall's prestige with the military here; the situation is the more remarkable since, even now, the public is still very largely unaware of his personality.

Enough time has elapsed, incidentally, to make certain that the Teheran conferences with Stalin were a success: probably changing the course of the war, maybe the peace. Every description of Stalin at the conference describes him as a sincere, fully coöperative participant, who attached great importance to the proceedings and brought to them whole-hearted rather than grudging assistance. He talked simply, firmly, realistically. The conference established the basic confidence in all-around good faith. The exchange of improved military information with Russia has already been one result.

Robert Sherrod of Time Magazine, in a deeply impressive talk here on Tarawa, helplessly concluded that the soldiers and the civilian population are "just talking different languages." He says newspapers and radio have thrown away the confidence of a generation of soldiers by absurd war news, silly optimism, ignoble reporting.

War Mobilization Director Byrnes told reporters the other day that he hoped the navy's color film of the Tarawa landing would break through popular over-optimism; he was shocked to hear that the picture had already gone to Hollywood to be prettied up. This is the grim, gory film from whose preview the navy excluded women reporters, despite the assumption that they are hardboiled. Theory is, the soft public can't take it. Actually the documentary—after some reasonable excisions—seems to be just what the public needs.

Washington T. R. B.

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The Hitler Image

IN THE NAZI WAR NEWSREELS every possible means has been employed to create an image of Hitler that transforms impassive spectators into fanatic followers. Gros once painted Bonaparte's visit to plague-stricken soldiers in a Jaffa hospital in a manner suggesting that he, like the Christian saints in Italian paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was endowed with the magic power of healing by touch. Taking up this tradition again, one recent Nazi newsreel episode assigns the traits of a savior to Hitler. He enters a room full of severely wounded soldiers, and as he strides from bed to bed, his raised arm seems to exorcise all infirmities, while cripples and invalids look at him with an excitement that implies their faith in his thaumaturgical faculties. "They live to see the proudest day of their lives," the commentary modestly adds.

Hitler's inspection of the Munich art exhibition in 1940 offered the Nazi cameramen a gratifying opportunity to reveal that the savior is also a genius. Having passed along a wall of paintings and admired such items as an old mill covered with snow or a Dolomite rock glowing in the sunset, the Führer approaches some sculptures, and here his genius manifests itself. The moment that he looks at a young marble or plaster woman, her naked body slowly becomes luminous and shines like the Dolomite rock. The solemnity of the process is augmented by an accompaniment of Wagnerian music. It is as if the illuminated body miraculously reflected the brightness of Hitler's inspirational powers—a phenomenon of transference that reminds one of spiritualistic seances. This episode seems to be proof of the great degree to which film propaganda can count on the credulity of the masses.

Frequently Hitler appears as the lord of hosts: followed by his generals he reviews parades, surveys destroyed fortifications or makes his entrance into a conquered city. After Hitler's tremendous military successes it was not difficult to represent him as the "victorious field marshal," but it must also be noted that the German film makers are experts at finding effective pictorial formulas to magnify this role. Close-ups of Hitler's head and raised arm against a cloudy sky elevate him above all mortals; another shot relates his head to the spire of a cathedral in such a way as to give the impression that Hitler, too, is a towering event in German history. Whenever themes of mythological significance are to be shaped, the Nazi film seldom fails to chose the right objects and angles.

Hitler triumphant is never seen without those crowds that have become a regular institution in Nazi Germany. The background of his relation to them is unveiled in the newsreel sequence of his train journey to a Berlin feverishly awaiting the *blitz* conqueror of France. This record, as well as the subsequent survey of his Berlin reception, was made at a moment when Germany thought a victorious peace imminent. Hope and happiness animated people's faces in that railway episode, and it was as though, thanks to the prospects opened by the overwhelming French defeat, the usually prearranged excitement seen in so many Nazi newsreels had for once given way to a true cordiality. Symptomatically, these pictures focus upon small groups or even single persons rather than upon huge crowds. Workmen and farmers wave to the passing train, village children form an improvised lane along the tracks, and at the stops in provincial stations mobs gayly besiege the car. Hitler behaves exactly like a popular movie star when he smiles down at a blonde girl handing him a bouquet or autographs pictures of himself and hands them out through the car window. But the significant point is that he never leaves the train to mingle with those who, according to the commentary, offer him "tokens of love, loyalty and gratitude." The triumphant Führer withholds any such gesture of genuine intimacy—an illuminating fact in a scene designed expressly to show the close contact between him and his people. Is his reluctance the outcome of fear? It rather reveals his concept of leadership. The Nazi regime depends upon its ability to manipulate people; in the interest of self-preservation it must suppress spontaneous feelings in favor of directed ones. Now the enthusiasm of the people in the railway sequence is no doubt sincere. But precisely for this reason Hitler cannot join them outdoors. For by doing so, he would implicitly recognize his crowd as individual people and thus deny the principles upon which his power is based.

To humanize the idol, an episode shows Hitler in informal contact with his troops. In this one sequence he walks across a field without any ceremony. "An old war horse is allowed to share in the breakfast," runs the commentary. Indeed, Hitler approaches a horse and feeds it cautiously. But even though it is a harmless, worn-out animal of the kind that is used in theatres, he looks uncomfortable in staging this show. His uneasiness is that of a man who keeps all creatures at a distance, and tries for a moment to overcome this habit. Instead of endowing Hitler with human traits, the scene only succeeds in confirming his unsocial character. It reminds one of a scene in the Nazi documentary "Fuer Uns," where Hitler comforts some weeping children of fallen partisans by patting them on their wet cheeks—a caress which fails to produce the intended effect because he absent-mindedly looks in another direction while doing so.

The intermezzo with the horse is followed by two shots picturing Hitler amid a multitude of soldiers who greatly enjoy his presence. Two soldiers in the background take snapshots of him as he smilingly returns to the waiting generals and cars on the highway. The little scene breathes confidence. Hitler displays a familiarity during this visit, which the commentary celebrates with the lyric words: "The Führer and his soldiers—an insoluble community guaranteeing the victory of German arms." Yet the two shots neither suffice to illustrate such pretensions nor do they allow any inferences as to the nature of Hitler's relation to people in general. For soldiers differ basically from people in that they form organized units subject to the laws of discipline. They are, like Hitler himself, men in uniform, and in joining them for a moment, the corporal of the last World War still remains within his peculiar sphere—a sphere strictly separated from the world over which he rules. This scene does not make him appear more human or humble, but rather exhibits how knowingly he handles the instrument "guaranteeing the victory of German arms." Thus some light is thrown on the Hitler behind the scenes by his official image on the screen.

SIEGFRIED KRACAUER

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The Bandwagon

"Full employment," said Fennelly [John F. Fennelly, executive director of the New York State Committee for Economic Development, addressing the Investment Bankers' Association of America] "would be incompatible with the free enterprise system which carries with it the right to a normal float of unemployed." – *Federated Press dispatch from New York City.*

Auburn-haired Joan Kiger, pretty 16-year-old schoolgirl, was acquitted last night on charges that she killed her father and younger brother. A jury of 12 farmers decided she had not been aware of having committed any crime. – *UP dispatch from Burlington, Kentucky.*

At long last, the films are getting around to making a picture from Robert E. Sherwood's "There Shall Be No Night," accounted one of the best plays to have come out of the war. . . . Mr. Sherwood has rewritten the play slightly, so that the setting is now Greece, with Germany as aggressor. – *From The Montreal Gazette.*

An avowed sentimentalist and sometimes a snob, I invariably feel a pang of sympathy, these days, when a first-rate private collection of art passes into the possession of the public. The public already has so much; the private owners have so little. – *Henry McBride in The New York Sun.*

States' Rights

"You know, Mrs. Thayer, the Bill of Rights has no application to the state of California. It is only a federal limitation." – *California Assemblyman Vincent Thomas, in a committee hearing on Japanese evacuees, as reported in The Pasadena Star-News.*

The Anti-Inflation Front

Smart new money clip. A practical safeguard against losing stray dollar bills. Tax included . . . $89.50. – *An advertisement in The New York Times.*

Total-War Department

For the past seven years New York's eligible young women have been making their formal bows to society at the Debutante Cotillion. . . . Most of the hundred-odd subdebs were worried about escorts.

Lt.-Gen. George Grunert, commanding general of the First Army and Eastern Defense Command, as honorary chairman of the floor committee, assigned his aide to handle the problem. A handful of young officers was ordered to go to rehearsals with the girls and be letter-perfect in cotillion choreography. – *From The Baltimore Evening Sun.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Punishing the War Criminals

SIR: One cannot but agree with Professor Glueck's views expressed in his excellent article on "Punishing the War Criminals" (The New Republic, November 22). However, I ask to be allowed to make a few remarks concerning some of his statements.

According to the author, an International Criminal Court to be set up by the United Nations should have jurisdiction of the following offenses: crimes committed against nationals of several countries in combination; those committed against people rendered "stateless" by the Nazis; those committed inside Germany; those committed by prominent Nazi officials.

Now in my opinion there is no reason for submitting all these cases to an exceptional system. They, too, ought to be ruled by the general provision of the Moscow Declaration that lays down the *principle of the territoriality of penal law* known, in fact, by all domestic legislations in the world. This principle, by its very definition, does not take into consideration the nationality of the victim as it does not consider that of the offender. Therefore, whether the victims involved are of several nations simultaneously or have no nationality at all, the trial of the war criminals should take place at the scenes of their crimes. Even offenders whose crimes were committed inside Germany ought to be tried in accordance with the territorial principle, perhaps under some Allied expression. The tribunal in such cases might be composed of German magistrates whose anti-Nazism is beyond any doubt (say, those who were robbed of their functions for racial or political reasons).

An International Criminal Court does not exist and has never existed. It will be necessary to create a completely new and quite complicated institution: rules of prosecution; investigation; laws to be applied; procedure; composition of the tribunal; carrying out of judgments, etc., etc. That would obviously take a lot of time. Afterwards all cases—and there will be a very large number of them—will have to be brought before that sole tribunal. Should the offenders have to be tried by an international jurisdiction, as suggested by Mr. Glueck for the cases enumerated above, the doing of justice would have to be inevitably postponed. Now we must keep well in mind that the chief reason why the criminals of the last war were not tried at all was that they were not tried at once. This time, to quote the author himself, "justice ought to be done immediately after surrender."

J. K. MIKLISZANSKI

École Libre des Hautes Études, New York City

The Curzon Line

SIR: Professor Bernadotte Schmitt, in his review of Professor Halecki's "Poland" [The New Republic, November 29], is evidently the victim of a widespread misconception as to the nature of the so-called "Curzon Line." This line has been called so often by advocates of Russian claims on Polish territory the "true border of Poland" that it is timely to point out that it was drawn by a member of the British Foreign Office (then under Lord Curzon) as a mere military demarcation line which the Red Army in 1920 was warned not to cross. *It was never intended to be a permanent or even temporary political ("international") border line.*

New York City ERIK V. KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

SIR: It seems to me that "the victim of a widespread misconception" as to the nature of the so-called "Curzon Line" is Mr. Kuehnelt-Leddihn. After the withdrawal of the German army

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from Eastern Europe in 1918-19, hastily organized Polish forces and troops of the Red Army confronted each other along hundreds of miles, without any line of demarcation having been recognized by either Poland or Russia. In December, 1919, the Allies formulated a line which might serve as a kind of temporary frontier in the sense that Polish claims to the territory west of this line were recognized by the Allies. This line corresponded roughly to the ethnographical line between Poles and Russians (admittedly there were some Poles to the east of the line) and has been generally recognized by impartial students as reasonable and fair; because the Allied declaration was signed by Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, the line has come to be known as the Curzon Line. The Allies did not pronounce on Polish claims to territory east of the line, but left the matter to be settled directly between Poland and Russia. The British government wished Poland to be content with this line, while the French government favored Polish expansion eastward.

In 1920 Poland attacked Russia, hoping to detach the Ukraine from Russia and make it the ally of Poland. After some initial successes, the Polish troops were driven back, and the Russians marched on Warsaw. At that point the Allies cautioned the Soviets not to advance beyond the Curzon Line, but the Red Army ignored this and it was finally stopped, not by any Allied warning, but by the rejuvenated Polish army commanded by Marshal Pilsudski and General Weygand, the *alter ego* of Marshal Foch.

Chicago, Ill. BERNADOTTE E. SCHMITT

Errata

SIR: May we call attention to two errors in the printing of our article on "Architecture in Wartime" in the issue of December 20. On page 881, "an urban concentration, 400 families to the acre," should read "400 persons to the acre." And in the last paragraph of the article, "the advertising and merchandising of communities" should read "the advertising and merchandising of commodities."

New York City PERCIVAL GOODMAN and PAUL GOODMAN

Men and Coal

SIR: Futile as it may be for an outraged author to howl about an unfavorable review of his book, this is my night to howl about Harold Ruttenberg's review of "Men and Coal" in your issue of November 29.

Harold, of course, is an avid *ibid* collector, a top-flight researcher, *i. e.*, one who copies down in long-hand, on little white cards, material that has been nicely printed in books, magazines and newspapers. So I'm not bickering with him about his snooty line that my book is "better written than researched" (what sort of English is that?) or that my chapter on the future of coal is "an uncritical collection of notes from what other people have said." I defer to Harold when it comes to research, merely wondering how a lowly layman like myself could write anything worth reading about the future of coal without referring to the findings of physicists, chemists, engineers, economists, etc.

My howl about the review is that in one place Harold grieves for me as a little lost rabbit inexplicably enmeshed in the coils of John L. Lewis, and in another place pictures me as forsaking my former criticisms of Lewis to become his "apologist." Grieves Harold:

> To be sure Mac includes a few criticisms of John L. Lewis, and in so doing reveals how well he knows and understands him, because each criticism is done in just that careful way that does not offend Lewis but ingratiates oneself with him. Mac must know Lewis' sinister motives and dark purposes, but just why he forgets them and chooses to play the role of apologist is not revealed in "Men and Coal."

I am not really dat old Machiavelli Coleman who knows the secret mind of John L. Lewis but just won't tell. It's not as subtle as that. When Lewis goes for the things I believe in—the organization of the unorganized, industrial unionism, the maintenance of union rights—I go along with him, as do the miners—100 percent of them. When he goes Red-baiting, Willkie-whooping or brow-beating, I think he's terrible, and I certainly intimated that in the book.

However, I'm a bit skeptical when Walter Winchell announces that Lewis is a "Jap" in disguise, when the Communists denounce Lewis as the master-mind of "the David Dubinsky-John L. Lewis conspiracy" to do something awful the exact nature of which the comrades have not yet discovered, when Phil Murray, Harold's current boss, modestly assures the CIO that Lewis set his (Murray's) feet upon the road to Golgotha.

All this dreamy stuff can't disguise the facts that in the 1943 mine controversy Lewis has made the only fight made by any labor leader to preserve the rights of collective bargaining, that as a result of this fight the "tame-cat" role of other trade-union officials has been notably altered and that the rank and file of other unions, notably Harold's steel workers, look with envious eyes upon the militancy of the Lewis leadership.

Finally a note for the little white cards. Harold reminds me reproachfully that Oscar Ameringer was violently opposed to Lewis in the pre-CIO days. Harold wonders how I can dedicate to Ameringer a book which has anything good to say about Lewis. Last spring, before Oscar went to the hospital, I had several long sessions with him in his Oklahoma home. We talked over the Lewis sections of the book and Oscar agreed with me in supporting Lewis in his 1943 stand against the childish arrogance of the War Labor Board, the snide connivings of the operators and for a decent wage for the miners. It is simply not true that Ameringer "never changed his mind about Lewis."

Portland, Ore. MCALISTER COLEMAN

Chesterton's "Magic"

SIR: Malcolm Cowley says in his book review that Chesterton's "Magic" was never revived [The New Republic, December 20].

Wasn't it "Magic" I saw as part of a Saroyan night last year at the Belasco? Saroyan's "Hello, Out There" was too short for $2.20. "Magic" made it too long.

Brooklyn, N. Y. JULIAN ARONSON

From The New Republic Mail Bag

A private stationed at Stillwater, Oklahoma, tells us that while reading The New Republic's supplement, "America and the Postwar World" (November 29), he noticed the "great number of ads placed by various liberal action groups devoted to winning [the] peace." He sees no reason why these groups should not all unite. The conservative forces, he points out, are very well organized.

Sgt. Bradley Bransford writes from Washington, D. C., to say that he objects strongly to the open letter by Henry Miller (The New Republic, December 6). Sgt. Bransford had never heard of Mr. Miller before, but he dislikes his attitude extremely.

Are we ready to call upon the President, asking him to take steps against the ever present danger of race riots? asks Mrs. Selma March Milwitzky, of Newark, New Jersey. "How many of the petitioners to the President come to him with clean hands? . . . How many individuals in public places have honestly endeavored to eradicate racial discrimination in their personal contacts? . . . Until that much is done it is childish to wish to place upon the already overburdened Chief Executive the responsibility for a solution."

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Books in Review

The Happiness Boys

IN THE DECEMBER 14 issue of The New Masses, there is a piece by Samuel Sillen that I read with personal as well as critical interest. It paints the portrait of an imaginary figure named Malcolm Cowley, who seems to have rheumatic joints and a very long white beard. He is "prematurely old," he is "rooted in confusion and nostalgia" and he never opens his mouth except to bewail the tempora and the mores. But Sillen's piece isn't altogether a flight of untrammeled fancy. It also disagrees with what the real Malcolm Cowley said about American literature in wartime, and its argument has to be quoted at some length:

> If Norman Corwin's radio scripts can be stupidly dismissed by a New Republic reviewer as "smug banality," what wonder is it that for Cowley "literature as an art is in a dead season"? [I don't see the connection, but no matter.] Nobody pretends that we are witnessing a great renascence of American literature at this moment. But as the recent Writers' Congress in Los Angeles, which Cowley does not deign to notice, has demonstrated, we are witnessing among America's democratic writers a growing unity, a new understanding of supreme issues, a new confidence in their powers as writers to help mold a liberated future.

This is the sort of argument that completely destroys itself. If Sillen can't mention a single literary work—if the best evidence of fruitfulness that he can uncover is a collection of radio scripts (very good of their kind) and a writers' congress that aroused a great deal of enthusiasm among its participants—then American literature must be in a woeful state indeed. At this holiday season, I feel like assuring him that things are not so bad as all that. Many good books have been published since 1940, even if none of them was a major work. We haven't fallen below the literary level of the last war (except in poetry), though sometimes we have come dangerously close to it.

I am somewhat discouraged about the literary production of the last three years, but not in the least disheartened. I am discouraged because so much of it has been hastily and badly written, and because there has been so little effort to feel or think freshly. History is being lived much faster and more imaginatively than it is being recorded. But I am not disheartened about the situation, since I feel that it is temporary, the result partly of the war itself and partly of earlier events that I discussed in my article. If we look back at the period between two wars, we can be pretty well satisfied with what our writers did. Those twenty years were probably as brilliant as any in American literature since the period that Lewis Mumford described as the Golden Day. If political conditions are not unfavorable, the years after the war may be still more brilliant.

It would be nice to feel as sanguine about those conditions as the editors of The New Masses. Some of their recent comments on political affairs might have been copied from 1929 issues of The Rotarian, so determined is their cheeriness and their faith in a brighter future just around the corner. They preach the gospel of service. They say, "Our people in their transformed mood, in their heightened anger, know their enemies. . . . It is good to know that unity has broadened, that it is maturing in the process of a people's war." That sets you wandering through the streets, looking for signs of broader unity and moral transfiguration, but all you can find is Christmas drunks and neighborhood shops with their shelves half-empty after a buying spree. "Democracy in America took another big step forward last week." Here The New Masses is praising Judge Landis for his decision that professional baseball clubs are entitled to employ Negro players. So far, no such players have been employed. "We believe that the locomotive of history will travel all the more safely and quickly, now that an incompetent and evil employee of the railroads has been tossed off the train. We refer to that age-old wrecker, Jim Crow, who got his walking papers last week from the President's Fair Employment Practices Committee." But Jim Crow refused to accept his discharge.

The comments I have quoted, however fantastic they may seem, are not to be taken as evidence of any deep-laid Communist plot. The New Masses wants a unified nation that can win the war without too much delay, and it wants us to extend the social gains of the last ten years. In other words, it has the same aims at this moment as the vast body of American liberals. Its mistake partly lies in surrendering its old and useful function as an opposition organ that described the abuses in American society. It can't describe them today, because it is afraid of being called defeatist, although some of those abuses are worse than ever before. But chiefly the mistake of The New Masses lies in believing that its aims, and those of the liberals, can be achieved simply by word magic. You cannot create unity by repeating that the nation is already unified. You cannot achieve progress by announcing week after week that American democracy has taken another great forward step.

The truth is that there are beginning to be sound reasons for optimism about the situation in Europe. A succession of Russian victories has encouraged the resistance movements in all the occupied countries, and those movements are proving to be democratic as well as patriotic. Our State Department, by supporting the conservatives in a half-hearted way, has helped to discredit them with the people of Italy and France. The liberals will have their chance in Europe after the war. But The New Masses seems to mistake the barometer readings from the Dnieper and the Seine for a report of weather conditions at home. You picture the editors dressed for a picnic, the men in sport clothes with guitars slung over their shoulders, the girls with their knees winking under bright linen play frocks, and all together caroling gaily as they march out into a snowstorm.

The prospects at home are dark today, and they may continue to be dark for the next few years. We can't make them any brighter by shouting that we are all splendid fellows full of unity and beans and moral strength who are taking a big step forward each week and Jim Crow has two strikes on

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him, hurrah, hurrah! We can make our prospects brighter only by fighting for reforms, in our local precincts and local unions as well as at Washington. The fight will be hard, and we can avoid disillusionments by remembering that the world is in the midst of vast transformations. Nothing will be finally settled in the next two years, even if the reactionaries should appear to have the advantage in one political struggle after another. The forces on our side are more powerful in the end, being the kindness and devotion and good sense of ordinary people in all nations, including our own.

MALCOLM COWLEY

The New Euphuism

New Poems, by Dylan Thomas.
Sacred and Secular Elegies, by George Barker.
The Violent, by Harry Brown.
Some Poems of Friederich Hölderlin. Translated by Frederic Prokosch.
The Illuminations, by Arthur Rimbaud. Translated by Helen Rootham.
The Trial of Lucullus: A Play for the Radio, by Bertolt Brecht. Translated by H. R. Hays.
Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. $1 each.
Coronal, by Paul Claudel. Translated by Sister Mary David, S.S.N.D. New York: Pantheon Books. 257 pages. $2.75.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING THINGS to watch, in the perpetual backwards-and-forwards evolution of poetry, is the emergence and development, during any given period, of a new fashion—and by fashion one doesn't mean fashion in form so much as fashion in tone. The form no doubt changes too, as it must, when tone changes. But it is the tone which changes first, which is to say the voice, which is again to say the language. We remember how distinct and strange was Mr. Eliot's voice, in 1911, and yet how wholly natural, with his "evening, lights, and tea, children and cats in the alley," "short square fingers stuffing pipes," "an English countess goes upon the stage," and all the other properties of shabby twilight suburbia, so instantly recognized as universal, but till then so entirely ignored. It was all of a piece, all skillfully in one key: the deadly commonplace as the bait in the mouse-trap, but the spring itself of classic design and infallible precision, Bleistein and his cigar as certainly followed by defunctive music under sea as Sweeney by the cry of Agamemnon. The effect of this on contemporary diction was astringent in the extreme, if not indeed disinfectant. Its influence can be traced through Pound on Yeats, and of the two poetic movements of the period, Imagism and the Georgians, neither could hope to stand up against it. Mr. Eliot's voice remains the most *characteristic* voice of the period from 1916 to 1930.

If it was the individual problem which fed and concerned Mr. Eliot, and notably his own, with his sometimes almost comical anxiety about *why* Mr. Eliot thinks what Mr. Eliot thinks when he thinks it, or his taste in ties ("rich but modest") and words ("exact without vulgarity"), or his worry over "concentration without elimination," Mr. Auden changed the tune and tone in the early thirties by the simple device of social multiplication. Like the sociologists, psychologists and politicians of the time, Mr. Auden thought in numbers, in plurals; and by objectifying in his verse this preoccupation with classes, groups, units, currents of economic and social change and currents of idea, Mr. Auden found a "voice" which was almost as influential and as readily *received* as Mr. Eliot's. Valedictory, valetudinarian, statistical, latinate, neatly abstract and generalized, its abandoned workings and rusty tramlines began to turn up everywhere, together with the ruined boys, the unnecessary workshops, guides in shorts pursuing flowers, and the short-haired, mad executives. Yes, it was something we all knew about, all right, and Mr. Auden did it brilliantly; but although the influence was useful, in that it expanded the objective of poetry, as against Mr. Eliot's increasing contraction of it (unless we except here "The Waste Land"), the method, as imitated by others and even by himself, became at last somewhat dehydrating. The fashion had gone too far and outlived itself, the dry bones were chirping again, the jejune needed a corrective. And the corrective turned out to be, what surely no one had expected, a kind of up-to-date euphuism.

Mr. Dylan Thomas started it: with a natural and strong love of language and of words for their own sake, and of English roots as against Latin, he reacted violently, perhaps too violently, from the fashionable desiccation of diction; and the consequence has been a spate of poetic purple, on all sides, which still shows no signs of abatement. Mr. Thomas' style and speech, nevertheless, like those of his two predecessors, was very much his own, *sui generis:* a fast-moving tide of images, nouns and noun-clusters, free-associational in its direction, but the association that of an imagination with enormous relish and gusto, and sense of color and, kinesthetically, of thrust and texture as well. The question was, however, and remains, whether a method so wholly devoid of the voice or the word, so deliberately given up to sound and fury, or good Elizabethan ranting (for which there is a great deal to be said), can ultimately be directable to more than one kind of poetic effect. Word-magic as a *quality* of poetry is one thing, but poetry as *nothing* but magic—one sees the limitations, as of the snake that swallowed itself and vanished, or the poet who, as Mr. Santayana puts it, merely swam about in a sea of sensibility.

> The hero's head lies scraped of every legend,
> Comes love's anatomist with sun-gloved hand
> Who picks the live heart on a diamond.

This passage from "The Map of Love," is not an extreme instance by any means, but it is very typical of the style, and it made one wonder where Mr. Thomas could go next. Could one do anything with this but repeat it, or repeat it with variations? The euphuism was already showing signs of self-destruction, both in Mr. Thomas' hands and in those of his many imitators; and his own new book is certainly in this regard disappointing. There are good things in it, but they aren't better, as they might be, despite the slackening of the fever and a discernible tendency to more conscious control.

Of Mr. Thomas' followers Mr. George Barker is the most original and the most brilliant, but also perhaps the most mannered. He has taken over the euphuism lock, stock and barrel; it is at times almost indistinguishable as style from his predecessor's, and it is no exaggeration to say that it can be very exhausting; but in his new book,

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"Sacred and Secular Elegies," he uses the method, even at its swollen worst, for his own purposes, and with much clearer definition and reference. Some of these elegies are very fine indeed: with a trifle less preciosity and affectation they could be superb.

Mr. Harry Brown is a gifted American congener of all these poets—and that is perhaps his trouble. His new book is his best, and that means very good, but the various influences are still a little too manifest and unabsorbed, for all the technical virtuosity. The anapests and dactyls are a little too easy and hurried. It is all slightly glib, with its alternations of the valedictory and the clever smirk—if only he would stop, and *really* feel something! A dash of Claudel's slow, earthy, self-making-fun-of integrity might be very chastening. . . . Of the present group of translators of poetry, Mr. Prokosch is the most successful, with Hölderlin, but not successful enough. The most interesting of them, however, is the Rimbaud, if only because to renew acquaintance with these old prose poems is to be startled to find how very dated they now seem, and how very vapid.

CONRAD AIKEN

Reason and Education

Liberal Education, by Mark Van Doren. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 186 pages. $2.50.

INTO A FIELD OF DISCUSSION too often marked by careless and even unscrupulous misrepresentation, Mark Van Doren has brought clearness of insight and generosity of spirit. His meditations upon liberal education are, in effect, an interpretation of the theory and practice of teaching as it now goes on in St. John's College. And so suitable is his style to his theme that he has done more than explain what liberal education is. He has also exemplified it. If anyone wishes, at a distance, to know what kind of teaching is done in a St. John's seminar, he could not do better than to read this book. He will find here an ardent enjoyment of great thinking and great writing, a stalwart faith in the value of ideas, a gay and yet savage insistence upon standards of intellectual craftsmanship, a joy in the comradeship of inquiry into fundamental problems, a sober realization of the fact that the attempt of men to understand and to control their destiny was going on long before his own studies began and will need to be continued long after his work is ended. Those are the insights of a "liberal" mind. And Mr. Van Doren shows them at work not only in St. John's College, but also in himself.

A good seminar, as seen by an outsider, presents a curious paradoxical mingling of belief and doubt. Around a table one finds from twelve to twenty persons, ardently inspired by a common faith which leads them into common action. They believe something. But, on the other hand, it is equally clear that everything which they believe is, for the seminar, open to question. Every idea is challenged, is subjected to the scrutiny of the group. It is that paradoxical union of conviction and inquiry which gives to the seminar its peculiar value as a form of liberal teaching.

The central faith which runs through Mr. Van Doren's argument is the belief that the process of liberal learning must be, at every point, guided by a single, coherent idea. It must express the unity of "reason." But what is reason? And how does it go about its work? When these questions are asked, the seminar which was opened by Socrates twenty-four hundred years ago, is again in session. A group of teachers and pupils are again, together, seeking for "the truth."

As an active member of the seminar which Mr. Van Doren calls together, I must, of course, challenge his interpretation of the faith which he and I share. I must ask the Socratic question, "What do you mean?"—In the few lines available for this review I can only indicate some of the directions which that questioning may take.

Mr. Van Doren asserts that liberal learning, at the college level, should be universal. "No human being should miss the education proper to human beings." That is, he says, the meaning of democracy. With that conclusion I heartily agree. Disregard of it is, perhaps, our deepest national blunder. And yet the reasoning by which the principle is justified seems to me strangely unconvincing. To say that a "person" is a human being who is "more than human," to describe a man as differing on the one side from the animals and, on the other side, from the angels, to declare that a free man is not free from anything in particular but is just "absolutely free"—those explanations are, I think, "out of date." They do not answer fundamental questions as those questions are now formulated.

A second contention of our seminar leader, in which again he speaks directly for St. John's, is his strong insistence on the "liberal" value of studies in mathematics and natural science. "Science is knowledge and knowledge cannot be inhumane," we are told. "The science we use liberates more minds than the classics we have, since we do not know how to use the classics."—Is Mr. Van Doren saying that we do "know how to use" the sciences in our colleges of liberal learning? The contrast he suggests is hard to formulate. But so far as I get the issue, I am inclined to disagree with him. Studies of non-human action are not "humane" in the same sense as are the studies of human action.

The two questions just raised run into a third question which is fundamental for all St. John's theorizing. The basic problem of any theory of teaching is that of the relation between knowledge and wisdom. Why, in terms of its effect upon his conduct, should a human being acquire the habits of clear, accurate and comprehensive study? Mr. Van Doren, like other St. John's theorists, suggests that problem by a discussion of the relations between the moral and the intellectual virtues. As yet, however, that discussion does not seem to me to come to grips with the problem as we are now called upon to deal with it.

If the time for the seminar were not over I would like to question the use of the traditional "seven liberal arts" as indicating the scope and divisions of a system of liberal teaching. That idea, too, seems to me inadequate for a present-day ordering of a college curriculum. And the method of selecting the Great Books needs more thorough analysis than Mr. Van Doren tells about. In fact, in this last question all the basic questions of St. John's program can be brought to focus. Which books shall we read? And why? Why so many? Why so few?

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It is such questions as these that St. John's raises about its own procedure. True to his principles, Mr. Van Doren has given us a good seminar. He has portrayed a deeply significant educational enterprise. He speaks adequately for a great tradition in which faith lives by doubt, in which belief finds justification only in its own criticism of itself.

ALEXANDER MEIKLEJOHN

Prophet in the Wilderness

London, Washington, Moscow: Partners in Peace? by Harold J. Laski. London: National Peace Council. 23 pages. Sixpence.

POLITICAL COMMENTATORS have now applied their exegetical scalpels to the recent three-power Moscow Declaration and have drawn from it the hope of a thousand years of peace. Yet we should be deluding ourselves, says Professor Laski in this tersely written and forceful pamphlet, if we were to forget the unalterable hard core of reality that lies beneath the surface of that sanguine forecast. He insists that the fundamental postwar reality will continue to be the stubborn conflict between the frustrated aspirations of the many and the vested privileges of the few. Although employing the Marxian method and the Marxian categories, he is no hardened dogmatist. He knows the temper of the British people and the mind of business enterprise. Changes in the social structure will be accompanied by costly strife, he says, if the possessors of privilege do not consent to needed reform. In the present roseate political environment, however, Laski is a prophet in the wilderness.

If the United Nations will employ their human and material resources at high levels after the war they may be able to get on with one another despite basic differences in political philosophy. Full employment, Laski shows, is the only indestructible cornerstone for peace in our time. But ". . . the contradiction," he says, "between the power to produce and the power to consume is insoluble within the framework of the existing order. If we are to establish freedom from want, we must go beyond the capitalist system. . . ." The leaders of the Western powers, though, do not care to go beyond capitalism. The suspension of controversial discussions in Parliament and the irreconcilable opposition to the Beveridge plan are indicative of the stiff-necked attitude of British conservatives. Their vision is circumscribed by an ingrained fear of disturbing the structure of political legitimacy in Europe. Nor do they wish to witness the dissolution of empires.

The welfare of the great mass of people, Laski clearly states, lies in an ever greater production and wider distribution of material goods. Stimulated by the requirements of war, capitalism has increased tremendously its productive powers. Yet the old way of distributing the crops of the farms and the goods of the factories will not have been altered after the war. The old hunger of enterprise for profits and the old lust for political power will again suppress the profound urge for a genuine economic democracy. The inescapable outcome, we are warned, is business as a system of imperialist power. The world will be divided into two hostile camps, "one under the patronage of Washington, and the other looking to Moscow for leadership."

Laski justifies his viewpoint by a shrewd and incisive examination of the foreign policies of Great Britain and America. Darlan, Giraud and Badoglio are far better measures of the ultimate intentions of the Western nations, he insists, than Cairo or Teheran. The Anglo-Saxon powers will hardly condone successful peoples' movements in Yugoslavia, Greece and France. Their foreign policy, which essentially seeks to buttress the principle of legitimacy, does more than just restore the political *status quo ante*. It restores all the predatory monopoly relations and the fearful insecurity that led to the outbreak of this war. Are not London, Washington and Moscow, Laski suggests, partners in war rather than partners in peace?

Military victory alone, he rightly maintains, is not enough. We must be able to fulfill the expectations of the people; we must answer the challenge of economic privilege. For only a unified desire to transcend the rule of law and the values of an acquisitive civilization will prevent a third world catastrophe.

This pamphlet is really a lucid summary of Laski's "Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time," and in many ways a more useful work. Here the strength of his ideas is not obscured by an involute prose style. It is a tract for those who want permanent peace and who "must be willing, like Paul on the road to Damascus, to remake the foundations of their lives."

BEN B. SELIGMAN

Architecture and Society

Task, I-IV, 1941-43. Edited by the Task Group, 211 East 49th Street, New York 17.

TASK, "a magazine for Architects and Planners," appeared first in 1941 as a student venture at Harvard, very good of its kind: functionalist, liberal-Left and concentrating on the social context of the profession. Now at its fourth appearance, Fall, 1943, the editors have left school and are seeking a role in the big world. Thus far the magazine has printed only a couple of articles of information and criticism not available elsewhere (notably Kantorowich's critique of Wright and Le Corbusier in II, and the account of Hannes Meyer and Hans Blumenfeld on Soviet planning in III); the bulk of it has been devoted to the social issues, social housing and the well known scandals—Willow Run, Stuyvesant Town, etc., editorializing for government subsidies and controls. The question arises whether a new magazine of architecture has a place; or better, in what direction should it move to make itself a place?

The news, plans and pictures of new building are pretty well covered in the big magazines, Architectural Forum, Architectural Record, Pencil Points. Heavy construction is covered in The Engineering News Record. All cover materials and techniques. A place for good articles on theory, history and esthetics would certainly be worth-while, if only there were such articles. (Task has the sophisticated contempt for theory and esthetics that is usual among laymen ignorant of the centrality and concreteness of philosophical discussion.)

The issue then boils down to this: what is and what should be a magazine of architecture and society? On this issue Task has so far floundered in the same booby-trap as

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many other periodicals seeking to connect a profession or a creative art with social problems. This is to devote itself to scandals and abuses that rise directly in economics and politics, and then wreak havoc in architecture and community planning just as in everything else. (Conversely, to panegyrize the politics that allow a certain amount of reasonable building.) But surely such political discussions of general importance should not be treated in the context or limited to the audience of specialist journals. The writers should air their grievances in regular departments of a party or a liberal press; and architects should learn of these things not as specialists but as citizens.

But architecture (and the same holds for the other professions and the fine arts) has not only this passive role to society, in which it takes its beating or gets its chance, but also a creative, an initiative role in which it invents plans that fix or change the mores of everybody, and makes analyses that clarify what everybody is desiring more or less unconsciously. "Men mold buildings *and* buildings mold men." In their most useful social function, the arts and professions are not specialties, expert in technical means, but they coöperate to determine the ends. They deal with the whole man. Thus, architecture and community planning deal with the whole pattern of overt movements. If a community-function and a shelter-function have been well analyzed and the right plan worked out, then the function of the architect *qua* architect is over and the architect *qua* persuasive citizen comes to the fore. But the fact is that the most vital and immediate problems of community planning of our time have not been well analyzed and the plans are not at the stage of political program. The most valuable service that architects could perform would be to find a plan and teach a program to such a party as will listen.

For example, the single cry of Task is for slum clearance and public low-rental housing meeting accepted standards. Nevertheless, every solution in terms of "housing" will soon recreate slums, will worsen transportation, will deepen the cleft of work from leisure and amenity and will confirm the attitudes of industrial slavery rather than industrial freedom. The problems must be analyzed in terms of the integration of industrial, domestic and cultural life: the architect must not be satisfied with piecing together the wreckage to make it bearable, but must initiate integrated plans to make the community livable. (In the absence of such plans it might often be better to distribute the public subsidy as rent-stamps than to freeze it in new construction.) The real architect is not merely a technical adviser to society, but one of the statesmen.

A magazine: to plan the integration of industry and agriculture with domestic life and culture; to analyze by continuing consultation with workers in every field the real functional and expressive pattern of their movements rather than of their biologically standard "shelter"; to find a program for those masses (*e. g.*, the labor unions) who must learn to become concerned for the reintegration of their economic and cultural life.

Such great tasks are hardly begun or not even thought of among architects. Therefore, is it not precisely the role of a little magazine in this, as in other professions and arts, to lead the vanguard?

PERCIVAL GOODMAN and PAUL GOODMAN

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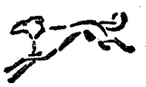

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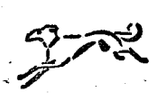

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A Reader's List

HARRIET TUBMAN, by Earl Conrad (Associated Publishers, Washington, D. C., $3.25). Harriet Tubman was the Underground Railroad "conductor" who "never lost a passenger." Herself an escaped slave, unable to read or write, this remarkable woman (literally called "Moses") returned South nineteen times, in the 1850's, to lead three hundred slaves north to freedom. Less well known but almost equally spectacular was her part in John Brown's conspiracy and her Civil War service as Union nurse, scout and spy. Conrad interprets Abolition-Underground activities as a great revolutionary movement and Harriet Tubman as America's "ablest woman revolutionary."

COME OVER INTO MACEDONIA, by Harold B. Allen (Rutgers, $3). In 1933 the Refugee Settlement Commission was given the gigantic job of relocating from Asia Minor to Macedonia about a million and a half Greek refugees. Translated into more meaningful proportions, it would be analogous to "thirty-eight million people pouring (within the space of a few months) into the United States . . . to be sheltered, fed and then absorbed into the social and economic framework. . . ." Mr. Allen, as director of the Near East Foundation, has written an informal socio-economic account, dotted with interesting personal histories and photographs, of a ten-year (1928-38) rural-reconstruction program. He indicates that permanent results can only be achieved by allowing the people themselves to take over the leadership of reconstruction. There is no reason to believe that postwar rehabilitation cannot progress along similar lines. The results have been encouraging and furnish a blueprint which the planners might well consider.

PLANNING NO. 214: A Civil General Staff (Political and Economic Planning. Available through The New Republic, 25 cents). In a previous broadsheet (No. 173) PEP argued for an expanded conception of government as the nation's common instrument for furthering its social and economic welfare in spheres in which no private agency can accomplish as much. The present broadsheet demonstrates that the machinery of government must be changed to properly sustain the complex burdens of its altered function. Above all in peace as well as war, a planning organization, a civil general staff is indispensable for a modern government. The alternative to planning "is not some laissez-faire paradise but government by the spasmodic and unpredictable interventionism of conflicting pressure groups." The kind of organization required is described in detail.

RELIEF FOR EUROPE, The First Phase of Reconstruction (National Planning Association, 25 cents). A report on the group meetings devoted to the problems of international relief, sponsored by the National Planning Association and attended by persons from many countries, from government agencies and private relief organizations. The result of those discussions is a great amount of expert information. Two primary facts underlie the entire problem: the situation in Europe is, in simple truth, "hideous"; it will provoke further wars, into which we shall certainly be drawn, if it is not remedied promptly.

Contributors

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DR. SIEGFRIED KRACAUER was formerly an editor of the Frankfurter Zeitung and Berlin correspondent of La Revue du Cinema of Paris. He left Germany in 1933, and lived in France till 1941, when he escaped to America. He was recently awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to write a history of the German film.

CONRAD AIKEN's latest book is "Brown Stone Eclogues," published by Duell, Sloan and Pearce.

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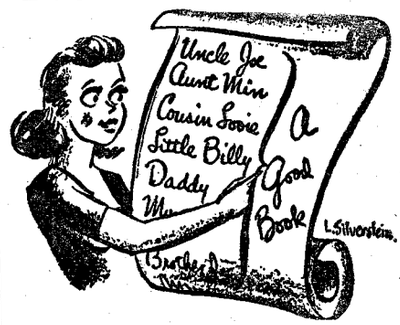

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